So the theme for this week is the seven factors of awakening. And the second factor of awakening is usually called investigation. And, that's how I was taught that when I was in Asia and Burma, teachers here in the West, and I think it's a wonderful quality to bring to mindfulness is to investigate. And, you know, the, the one word that I like that kind of vipassana word for, that encapsulates this quality of investigation is the word What? Just Just a word of what. What is this? What? And I like this word, because if, in asking what what is this? We don't answer the question with words like with an understanding, but rather it's a movement of opening to being more receptive, more attentive, to let things to register things more fully. As if the what is answered by reality, not by our thinking mind, just like what and then available. And the investigation is often how it's translated. It's I think it's especially what I'm going to do for this week and what's going on in our society. I want to take us to the literal meaning of the word and probably closer to what the Buddha meant. The Pali word is dhamma-vicaya and vicaya means to differentiate, to distinguish. Some people will translate it as discriminate, and I would do that except that we have such strong connotations of that word. I do. Associations with bias. But to differentiate, to distinguish, dhammas, dharmas. And Dharmas can mean anything at all. The particular particularity of anything, each detail of things is a dharma. But it also means mental qualities, the quality of the different functions of the mind, what's happening in the mind. But the important thing I want to emphasize this is a differentiation. So, mindfulness is a foundation, is the beginning. It's not the end of practice. To really be able to rest in mindfulness and really be attentive is very satisfying, very meaningful. But the clearer the mindfulness becomes, the clearer the awareness is really established in the present moment, and really begin seeing clearly. The more we start seeing each thing, in and of itself, you see the distinctions between things. Rather than seeing going out in the sidewalk and just seeing him on the street, we see the cracks in the sidewalk and we see the little grass that's growing up in the gaps between the, you know, in the cracks of the sidewalk or, and we
see the details of what's happening. And we're making starting to see greater and greater details like things began highlighting, become highlighted, like seeing and greater and greater resolution, our experience. And so the it isn't so much the active engage, investigation, thinking and probing that dhamma-vicaya means, but rather it's starting to distinguish and differentiate the particularities of what's happening, rather than than generalizations of ideas we have, but what's happening. So I might be sitting and I might, I might have idea that my breathing, maybe my breathing is uncomfortable as I meditate, and my mind keeps wandering off. And so the general generalization might be, oh, this is a bad day to meditate, I shouldn't have sat down to meditate. So that's very far removed from really taking in the details of the moment, and really kind of being settled and aware to see and differentiate that the breathing is just uncomfortable. I've eaten too much, my bellies distended, and it feels uncomfortable to kind of exhale into that kind of belly and, and, and then I'm thinking about something and, and there's a detail in my mind keeps walking, going off a little bit for me off into the right hemisphere, somehow the right direction, as I think about something that's, you know, happening at home, which is kind of the direction of home for me sitting here and I'm starting to see the details of it all. And the details are not a judgement, details are just seeing clearly for what it is. And I could then kind of open and rest in the distended belly and just feel it's uncomfortable. But I don't have to make it a problem. I just see distended belly. And this movement towards differentiation allows us to do something very powerful. And that is we begin to be able to make the distinction, to see clearly differentiation between different qualities of attention, different qualities of mind, that are engaged, and we're doing anything. And this is really at the heart of the onward leading nature of the Dharma. And that is as we able to settle in mindfulness and really kind of become seek more and more clearly, to the experience and see and settle and see and settle further and really be. At some point we start seeing the dhammas of the mind, the different mental qualities. We are seeing because Are you seeing differentiate between the things we're doing in our mind that are skillful, and things that we do, that are unskillful. To put it in very experiential terms. So it's not too abstract. We start feeling, seeing or sensing the qualities of what the mind is doing, that have a sense of Ouch, as part of it. Or those things are qualities of the mind that have Ah, that's nice. That's good. We start differentiating between what is has qualities of stress or ease, what has qualities of pleasant, versus what type brings, disease, what unpleasant. And as we begin to kind of just becoming more sensitive to this and start seeing deeper and deeper into how the mind functions. Then, for example, we can do that with mindfulness itself. With the meditation itself. We can some point notice that I'm actually leaning forward. I'm trying, I'm really trying in a way that I'm contracted and tight and being mindful. And that contracted and tight feels unskillful. There's an ouch in it. There's a little unpleasantness in that. And perhaps just knowing that something releases in relaxes, I don't need to be leaning forward and straining to try to be mindful. Or I can make the adjustment to it to be not tight and contracted in mindfulness, but see if I can be relaxed and mindful. And so this ability to differentiate what's happening in the mind or the heart, gives us a tremendous wisdom. Because we can start seeing you know that if we're really centered ourselves and take in the information that's here and differentiate what's going on, and stay present, we can feel that as we say something which is mean spirited We can feel the Ouch. That's in us as we say it. As we start saying something that's kind, we can feel how, Ah, that's nice. Or if the kindness is, is somehow off, is somehow I don't know. You know? Not really,
it's more like a pity or something. It's a possible actually, if you're really centered to feel Oh, my kindness the way what I think is kindness is a little bit off, it feels uncomfortable, I feel tight, I feel constricted. There's a lot of self involved in the selfing itself is kind of a tightness and constriction. And, or, or if we feel that we're being mean about to be mean to someone. It certainly feels uncomfortable, but we've really start differentiating, we see that underneath that meanness is we're feel afraid or feel somehow maybe we're trying to protect ourselves and so on. Well, that's interesting. Maybe I can find how to protect myself without being mean. Find a different way. And so that is we get we have a tremendous amount of information that's available to us in terms of the quality of our hearts and minds as we engage in the world. And this investigation is so much probing and analyzing what that is, but rather the mindfulness helps us become more more sensitive, and so the path to this kind of investigation is a path of relaxed awareness settling in and a stat and abiding and awareness. One of the most frequent ways the Buddha talks about mindfulness is that it's not something we do so much. But something we establish, and something we enter. And something we abide in. So this is all these kinds of verbs. don't suggest act of doing something. But rather there's something there we can enter, something there that we establish or abide and rest in. And so, as we're resting in this mindfulness, abiding and learning how to be centered in this, this capacity to differentiate becomes stronger and stronger. And this is a treasure. The seven factors of awakening are considered the crown jewels of Buddhism. And, and then we as we differentiate and see the details more, we start becoming our own teacher. We start seeing the Dharma in ourselves. The differentiation of the Dharmas is to see the teachings in our own moment to moment experience. And it's not very complicated. It's as simple as the ouch and they ah. The feeling of the stress or the distressing, the ease or the unease that's there and subtler and subtler ways and to learn how to be and with that experience of differentiation of seeing clearly what's going on inside of us, kind of keeps opening up two paths. Maybe very, very broad paths, but kind of one is towards greater freedom and the other is to greater loss of freedom and caughtness, bondage even they said ancient language and, and to feel and sense and smell, the movement towards freedom through this capacity to differentiate our experience, to see the particularity of it. And so, one of the reasons in mindfulness practice we are trying to we're trying to shift into an attentional mode, into the mode of a kind of silent awareness, almost silent awareness. As opposed to the mode of thinking our way through life or everything is processed through the filter of our thoughts, ideas, or stories or commentaries that we might have about things. Then if we can kind of step back from that, and, and have a deeper foundation that's aware of experience, and keep resting in it and opening and resting and coming here. slowly over time. What will happen is with that foundation of mindfulness, the differentiation of our experience, the seeing the distinctions within it, seeing the particularities of things, begins to kind of become, you know, clearer and clearer. And this is where wisdom begins to be born, this is where the path to greater awakening begins happening. And this is where we can participate better in the world. Because if we know ourselves well enough, we can pick up the subtle ways in which we're off in our communication with others, or the big ways that we are, we can pick up the cues inside of what really is wishing for the welfare of others, and what is not. And we'll discover in this process, that it's in it for our own benefit, to live for the welfare of others, and for our own harm, to live the opposite, to be concerned with the, you know, harming others or putting down others or being critical of others or being prejudiced to towards others or being racist. It's,
you know, it's a kind of self harm. we'll discover that not because we have to analyze it or believe it, but we get the data, we get the information from within. So mindfulness is just the beginning of the path. And, and in terms of the seven factors of awakening, the path then continues through the innate natural capacity of heightened sensitivity to the uniqueness and specialness, of each detail of experience as it unfolds for us. Beautiful Thing. So, thank you, and I look forward to our time tomorrow.