So the theme for this week is the roots, the roots of wholesome and the roots of unwholesome behavior. The unwholesome behavior are greed, hate and delusion. And the roots of wholesome behavior is non greed, non hatred and non delusion. And to make this distinction, to see and feel that distinction is really central to the teachings of the Buddha. To make that distinctions allows us to be become our own teacher, allows us to see where the path of practice opens up for us. There's a wonderful little dialogue in the suttas. There's a whole series of texts where the, someone asked a question in verse and the Buddha replies in verse. And so in the connected discourses, there's this poem that goes, someone asks, "from whatever one rains in the mind. From that no suffering comes to one. Should one rain in the mind from everything, one is freed from all suffering?" So this is an easy conclusion to come to that somehow the Buddha's teachings are some way to not suffer. It's just avoid everything. Avoid life, pull ourselves in so far just going to be disconnected. Go into some deep, maybe disembodied state that has no contact with the even or to oneself, there's are such reified meditation states, for example. And only by having no contact with the world, pulled back fully, can you be free of suffering. So that's one whole thing that to this person comes to the Buddha next this claim. And the Buddha responded, "one need not rein in the mind from everything. When the mind has come under control." No ... "one need not rein in the mind from everything, when the mind has come under control, from whatever it is that wickedness comes, from this one should reign in the mind." So there is a checking of the mind, holding back of the mind. But not from everything. But rather from those where evil comes, from a wickedness, where harm comes from. That we don't want to do. So this is the emphasis in the Buddha. So don't disconnect from the world. In a sense if we disconnect many things from the very things that lead us to cause harm.

And so, not disconnecting from everything is it goes along with this, being able to see the difference between what's wholesome and unwholesome. The wholesome is what allows us to thrive, to grow, to become full. The word thrive is not a word often associated with Buddhist texts, the Buddhist teachings, but there are words that could be translated easily as thrive. And this growth, this fullness and here, there's a beautiful little kind of analogy used using the moon. "Just as, during the bright fourth night, whether by night or day, the moon only increases in beauty, roundness and brightness, in diameter and circumference. So to for one who has faith in wholesome qualities, whether by night or day, only growth and not deterioration in wholesome qualities is to be expected." So, it's possible to thrive, to grow so the inner life feels like the full moon, full and shiny. And to do that we have to have faith in our capacity
for wholesome qualities. Wholesome quality means qualities of character, qualities of heart mind. That there are these beautiful things that we can do.

And so that's the direction we're going. It's not to a direction of greater and greater disconnection or emptiness or not connected to anything at all, an emptiness, where just kind of we become empty, empty, empty of any contact and life itself. We're talking about becoming fuller in life, more enhanced in life, but without any conceit, without any selfishness. That's the art of this. And so, to understand the unwholesome roots, how we do the opposite is actually quite important. And we should, I'd encourage all of us to have a certain deep appreciation for when we have something like greed, it gives us opportunity to study it and see it well. Not to study it so we can be more greedy or better at our greed, but really become familiar with it. Really understand how it feels physically and mentally, emotionally. What comes along with it. We're being asked in mindfulness practice to really understand what's happening here for us in a deeper way.

And with that in mind, I thought it might be nice for me to read. Nyanaponika, one the great monks from the last century, scholar monks, he gives a nice list of not synonyms of greed, but if greed is the umbrella term, for the category, it's all the little kind of aspects of greed within that category. And surprisingly, the first word he uses is a word that we would use normally associate with greed. And so it's kind of a koan, kind of like like how could this rather than just batting it away and say that's crazy? That's wrong. It's more interesting to ask the question, in what circumstances is this the case? So the first one is liking, wishing, longing, fondness, affection, attachment, lust, cupidity, craving, passion, self indulgence, possessiveness, avarice, desire for the five sense objects, desire for wealth, desire for offspring, desire for fame, etc.

So that's a big list and some of those things we don't automatically associate with being a wholesome. But rather, what we're being asked to do is not to come to some conclusion at all these words, point to something unwholesome. It's our job to discover in ourselves when there's unwholesomeness in these kinds of desires.

So I think I think of desire as being also an umbrella term that's even broader than the word greed. That desire is, encompasses both the wholesome desire and the unwholesome desire. And the unwholesome desire, our desires that diminish us. Unwholesome desires are ones that come from a feeling of lack, or fear, or frustration, or even anger that we're not getting what we want. But the sense of lack or wanting, it's a big drive for greed, unwholesome desire. The wholesome desires, which I like to use the word aspiration to refer to, partly because aspiration is related to the word breath, can be, you know, it's the Latin roots. And so when the breath is at ease, when we breathe easily or at home, in our breath, at home, in our body, at home in ourselves, and there's an ease there, what's the desires that arise from that? That is like, helps us to grow and develop in these good qualities, to become like the full moon, to thrive in some way.

And so to learn the difference between the kinds of desires that diminish us and the kind of desires that enhance us. The kind of desires that hurt, that have suffering inside of them, harm in them. And the kind of desires that are beneficial and supportive and healing. Human beings desires are really central to human being. We're kind of human desirelings more than human beings. And we want to be very careful not to make automatic idea that we should rein ourselves in from all desires. We want to rein ourselves into those desires, which to us that poem wicked or which are, you know, harmful.
So, in investigating this, can we feel inside? What is it that drives our attention? What is drives our concern? What's the source for what we want to do? And it's possible for a mindful enough to feel and sense there's a sense of lack. There's a place of contraction, of tightness, there's it actually feels very uncomfortable to have this. Greed at the forefront of it, kind of the ideas of it, can feel pleasant the aspiration, the wish for something, the anticipation of it can feel pleasant. So there can be a confusion or a drive for pleasure in greed. However, at its root, it's going to feel something's off. Something doesn't quite feel right. We're not settled on ourselves.

There's a whole other category of desires, where we are settled on ourselves. Where there is no harm. In fact, it feels good, it feels satisfying, nourishing, nurturing, to have it. So one of the wants I mentioned already is faith. Faith classically is understood as a kind of desire for something. A kind of moving towards the object of faith, but not out of neediness and clinging, or lack, but out of a sense that this is the direction of growth, this is the direction of the moon to become full. So faith is classically seen as a healthy desire. A healthy desire is generosity. The desire to give may or may not be wholesome, but the desire to be generous comes from the goodness of the heart. And generosity is considered one of the classic descriptions of non-greed.

So, when we want to be generous, that's also something that a mindfulness practice is, with mindful practice we want to feel and sense because we want to really stay present for ourselves, to see the consequences, the effect of how we live has on ourselves. And if we come from generosity, it's possible to feel and grow from the goodness of that generosity. It can be so good that it doesn't really, how to say this, we're not really concerned about so much about, well we are concerned about whether it supports other people to be generous, we want to be wise about generosity. But the real, for personally for ourselves, where we get our satisfaction from is can be how good it feels to be generous. How good it feels to love, rather than want to be loved. How good it is to give rather than to get.

So there's a fork in the road. The attention or thoughts can go in the direction of greed, unwholesome desires. And, and it can go in direction of wholesome desires. If you're settled enough and mindful enough, it'll feel pretty natural to go in the wholesome direction. That's the way that the seed grows and flowers.

But it takes exploration. Discovery takes time. And it takes a willingness to look at what's difficult in oneself. It takes a willingness to see that not all of, you know, what's the hard and difficult, where that sense of lack is, where the sense of neediness is. And then the art of all this is to meet the lack, meet the neediness, meet the fear, meet the frustration. Meet it with a wholesome mind, wholesome attention. Meet it with kindness and goodwill. Meet it with generosity. Meet it with having faith that it is possible to let that inner life grow. The clouds can part and the full moon can be seen.

So, thank you for today, and I look forward to our time tomorrow.