So we come to the fifth and last talk on mindfulness of emotions. And I like to think that all our emotions should be respected. And that one of the great places to do that is in meditation. Where we don't act on the emotion or act out of them, but we allow them their freedom to move through us with mindfulness, with this very special awareness that makes room for things, but doesn't pick things up or doesn't react to things, or doesn't get caught up in the story side of emotions, the story the predictions, the interpretations, the meaning making, the conversations that kind of keep the pot stirred up. Keep the motion of emotion, keep going and flowing. Apparently and maybe I said this that in the original French word that from which emotion comes from it apparently means to stir up. And then Buddhism we talk about, the Buddha talked about whirlpools and the whirlpools of life for the suffering. But the current of the river that flows freely and doesn't get swept up in as in a whirlpool. That's where freedom is, the current and the flow.

So the fourth foundation, so what I'm saying this week is that there are four different perspectives or frames of references with which we can look at emotions. And the very act of choosing to use these four different perspectives, to look at what we call an emotion whatever that is, is a movement of freedom, is a movement of stepping away and not being enmeshed or caught in the emotion and stepping away. Take a look at it. Oh, what is this? What is this experience? Is it kind of freedom there to do that? What is this as opposed to kind of wallowing it or caught in it or indulging in it or whatever it might be.

And so each of these four perspectives, and the last one is the foundation of dhamma, dharma. And exactly what that means is been one of the great challenges of studying this four foundations of mindfulness because dhammas means so many different things. But if you look at what the Buddha
actually teaches in these four, in the fourth foundation, there's a few things that are relevant in terms of looking at emotions. One is that just as in this second, third and third Foundation, there's a kind of division between looking at the things that are suffering are surface like, and those which have to do with freedom, or the depth of our being the inner life. So that division also exists in the fourth foundation. On one hand, it's looking at the ways in which we get caught ways which we cling or crave, the very sources of the movements of the mind that bring suffering and persistent suffering. And that also beginning looking at the movements of the mind or the inner life, that lead to freedom. And both in terms of the states of mind that come upstate qualities, inner qualities, wholesome qualities, and the insights that that bring freedom. And so, in a very simple way, it's doing it when we look at emotions to notice if there is some closing down contraction clinging dimming of the inner light that goes on when we get caught up are these emotions are strong. And in particular, where is that clinging, there can be strong anger which is flowing through us. And that clinging might be our identification with it or are believing it, or our resistance to it or, or having it or shame whatever it might be. That's where the clinging is.

But if we look really deep into the anger, we probably find that deep inside, anger only arises because somewhere in there, there was something we were clinging to, clinging to our preferences. So we were frustrated, clinging to our desires, and not having them fulfilled, clinging to not having some experiences or all kinds of things. So to look where's that clinging, where's the craving, in relationship to the emotions that we have.

So the Buddha talks about the five hindrances as examples of this, that involve something as contractions and clinging, that hinders or obscures, closes down, wisdom and opening and he also talks about something called the fetters, the ways in which we get knotted up. The fetters literally, the Pali word, literally means a knot. So to get where we get knotted up, so there's, you know, there's there's an object like the striker, and there's my seeing of it. But then there's a knot that gets formed between the two, in the sense that if I really crave this knot or think this is an important knot, and that you know, my very status as a Dharma teacher is dependent having a really nice striker and a really clinging to it and preoccupied with it. There's all these mental knots and preoccupations that go on, in a sense that kind of metaphorically that exists between my seeing of it and the striker itself. And to loosen and let go those knots between that and let there be space and openness. There's just a striker and there's the seeing of it and kind of messing with it and complicating it with all my craving and clinging.

So he talks about this and you know, we get knotted up. And as a way of getting caught, as we get unknotted there are these unclicking and open up more widely. And as we get a little bit more of in the flow of practice kind of really trusting the present moment, staying present and not drifting off on our thoughts, the whirlpool of thoughts. Then the we can start noticing that there's more going on in your emotional life, then, only things which are difficult or afflictive are challenging or hard, there are start to notice more the good qualities that are there. And this emphasis in Buddhism to also don't deny what's
difficult, don't kind of pretend it's not there or bypass it. But also don't bypass, avoid, deny that there's also beautiful qualities present, available. And for most people, there's much more inner beauty much more inner and goodness, that's available, then they avail themselves of that they allow themselves to feel sometimes because we're not brave enough to experience it.

Sometimes we feel we don't deserve it. Sometimes we, it's all kinds of we're afraid of it. Sometimes we're just preoccupied and don't even know it's there. As we meditate and look at deep more deeply at the emotions. We don't want to be only fixated on the challenging ones. We want to also begin looking around and start appreciating that in the mindfulness, in the openness, the open awareness of things, this stepping back and seeing an emotion, even a difficult one, in that opening and seeing, there starts to be a little little hints and then eventually strong hints and strong presence of really good qualities.

And in the fourth Foundation, that Buddha is talking about, looking at noticing how these, what he calls the seven factors of awakening arise. And so these are noticing mindfulness itself awareness itself as a wholesome quality, noticing investigation, this kind of looking more clearly and precisely what's really going on here is a really good in livening quality. It's not meant to be stressful or closing down to, you know, to analyze in some close way, but this kind of Or something like opening the windows to see more clearly cleaning the glass maybe. And then there's a whole of some kind of energy that can arise and enlivening kind of, feeling of presence and engagement. There can be joy, happiness, there's all kinds also is available. feeling of calmness, tranquility, subtleness, it's really, really can be really sweet.

And there can be Samadhi unification, settling this harmony being centered on experience, it feels really good. And finally, the in some ways, a very, it's hard to believe but they're really they're really most sublime and meaningful, valuable, satisfying experiences is the seventh of the factors which is equanimity, not an indifference, not an aloofness, but a kind of very profound sweetness and satisfaction. Have a mind a heart, which is spacious and holds things, but it's not reactive, maintains its peace. So to have the ability to begin opening, there's more going on here and also appreciating that in this emotional life, that there's also this, these good qualities and to support them and support them by making room for them and seeing them more and, and including them take the time for them. We live a busy life, busy running around physically or busy running around mentally. There's no room for these seven factors of awakening to come. And as we recognize them and slow down our life just enough doesn't have to look slow, but so that we can be present for our experience, then these beautiful qualities can come and that changes the dynamic. It changes the ecology of our interaction. emotional life, to have some of these factors of awakening present means that when difficult emotions arise, we can have a very different relationship to them than if we're getting preoccupied in the busy contracted mind is just kind of caught up in the drama of the moment.

Then the last part of this fourth foundation, in there built into the fourth foundation all along, is to notice to observe how all these things that are, we might call emotions are actually in constant phenomena. They're actually coming and going. And when we're not fixating them or holding on to them through

This transcript is machine generated and may contain errors
Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 4.0 License
audiodharma.org
concepts and ideas and stories. There's, everything is flowing, everything is coming and going appearing and disappearing, arising and passing. There's this current that's moving along, and to see that deeply and to see that in relationship to our suffering, to see whatever our profound suffering is, rather than fixing it. We see through it. And we see through it by seeing that it's not solid, it's not fixed. there are gaps, there are spaces. There are it appears in awareness, in reflections, and thought and ideas. And also it disappears. Very, very fast. Moment by moment in a certain sense. It's flickering through it's a kaleidoscope of experiences coming going. To see it arise, see it pass and see that, in that almost like in the gap when things are no longer there for a moment, there's freedom and to trust this, the flow of things, to trust is to be quiet enough and still enough or open enough to let these emotional life come and go and flow and change and more. Then we start seeing there's not, they're not the whole picture. There's, it's almost like there's gaps and pauses and spaces in our suffering. Where freedom is. Where liberation can be. Where there's ease and peace.

So, four different perspectives, for looking at our emotional life. There are many perspectives for looking at our emotional life. I'm not offering this as being the, you know, the right one. But for people doing mindfulness practice, these four foundations of mindfulness are really central to understanding our practice. And so it's interesting to take central aspect of mindfulness and apply them to something like emotions, and maybe to to find more freedom, more respect, and more benefit from the wonderful emotions the wisdom of emotional life as well. And maybe the wisdom that emotional life that leads us onward to greater and greater freedom.

So, thank you very much for this.

And a couple of things, few things. One is that a few weeks ago, Nikki Mirghafori substituted for me while I was away. So some of you know her now, tomorrow morning, she's going to teach kind of a morning little retreat on resiliency. And so that's on IMC's calendar and what's new, if you're interested in that and being with her, and also some time ago, Diana Clark did a week here for you. And she is going to start a year long program called Entering the Stream, meets once a month for kind of a day. And it really looks at the wisdom teachings of Buddhism that have to do with the path of liberation. And finally, as soon as in a couple of minutes, I'll I'll step away from here and turn this YouTube off. And then I'm going to open up the Zoom Room might already be open. And we'll have a community meeting for those of you who'd like to stay and chance to have a little discussion and also, if maybe do some a breakout group. And then so I look forward to meeting you that way and hope maybe you like to meet each other. And you can find the link to it, either at the top near the top of the chat, if you scroll right near the top, like second or third little chat, or when I have a chance I'll put it near the bottom wherever I can slip it in. It's also an imcs calendar. And it's also in what's new on the homepage of IMC called YouTube community meeting. And the password is meta, m.e.t.t.a, the word for loving kindness. So hopefully I'll see you in a few minutes. Thank you