So today I continue this four part series on Right Samadhi. In a longer series on the Eightfold Path.

It's often a question people ask, what's the difference between mindfulness and concentration? And there's a lot of overlap between how these work in us. And some people who practice mindfulness will actually be doing more concentration. And people who do concentration are actually doing more mindfulness because of how much overlap they are. In the imprecision may be in the use of the words. And there's no problem with this because concentration and mindfulness go hand in hand. They're there to support each other. And the deeper dimensions or the more developed dimensions of Buddhist meditation, mindfulness and concentration come together and work together. The stronger the mindfulness is the more concentration there's they're kind of in the wake of it. The stronger the concentration, up to a point, the stronger the mindfulness. In fact, in the classic descriptions of two deepest of the four absorption meditations, the four jhanas, the word mindfulness is included as part of that, as part of those states. So they come into play in a very significant way.

Very approximately, one way of distinguishing mindfulness and concentration is classically mindfulness is more about what we're what we're attending to. So if we're focusing on the breathing, we're really getting into the nuances of the breath. Really, really letting it register the experience of breathing in a deeper and deeper way. And the fullness and the texture and the variations of sensations that come into play as we're breathing, become more and more highlighted and clearer and clearer. And more and more distinctions are made, naturally kind of this is what's happening. And as mindfulness gets stronger, that happens with greater and greater, it's like having a microscope on it. And seeing greater and greater detail of what's happening. Not because we're straining, but because the mind is so settled and open and undistracted. It's just really right there. But it's more understanding the object of attention. When we do concentration practice, then the focus still might be on the breathing. But the details or nuances of the experience, the sensation of breathing, is not really the subject or the main thing that's going on. In a sense, with concentration meditation we're just using the breathing as an anchor. As a
place to keep the attention from wandering. And the subjective experience of what happens to us as we're meditating becomes a little bit more in the forefront of the experience. So with mindfulness it's more, in a sense, we're studying the objects of attention. And concentration, we're studying the subject that is concentrating.

Now I want to emphasize again, that there's a big overlap of those and these two are not so seriously separated from each other. So both are going on, usually at the same time. And they support each other. But in terms of concentration practice, as that concentration deepens, it's the subjective experience that begins shifting. That we open and keep opening too. And so the subjective experience, there's five different subjective experiences that are emphasized for deeper concentration practice. And those five subjective experiences, we can start noticing when they come into play. And there's a way of relaxing with them, opening to them, appreciating them, that allows them to grow and develop. Partly because they're all happening in the present moment, the part of the present moment experience. And they're there as the cheerleaders or the support or the supporting actors or something for getting more and more unified, focused. Really here. And you might say really focused on something like the breathing, whatever your focus is. But that's kind of a little bit too simplistic for the unification of all these different parts of ourselves, are being gathered together for this purpose of being unified and settled here.

So the five different factor sometimes are called jhanic factors. And then some ways I find that they're more useful than for those of you know about this, then they're certainly focusing on the jhanas themselves, these four different stages of deep absorption. And partly the jhanic factors, these factors, come into play at all kinds of different levels of concentration. So they're useful, just kind of as a reference point to help us harness all these different capacities we have, for the purposes of really being here in the present.

So the first two of these kind of subjective experiences, attention to how we are as we're meditating, have to do with what's called the initial application of attention. Or the initial thinking about, connecting to the focus of, for example, the breathing. And the second one is the sustained attention. So we begin kind of in a relaxed and fluid, open way, start becoming attuned or sensitive or harmonized with the way in which we come back to the breathing. And the way that we sustain our attention with the breath. So of course, the mind will wander away a lot. And some people get disappointed, they get angry, some people jerk their mind back, they pounce their mind back on the object of attention, like the breathing. The idea is we want to do it harmoniously. We want to be sensitive to the subjective experience of coming back into the present moment, to our focus of attention. And to do it in a way that you enjoy doing it, you want to do it, it's nice to do. Because you do it calmly, you're doing it kindly, lovingly. Maybe with a wonderful sense of purpose. It's such a profound thing to get concentrated. It's like one of the great useful things, it's a transformative, healing helpful thing. And it's oh, you're so fortunate. I get to do this, I come back. And this coming back, doing it in a harmonious way, clear way, so you enjoy doing it, and you're back with your breathing.

Some people have developed that muscle really well, they come back over and over again. But the second muscle to develop is the muscle of sustaining attention, hanging in there, lingering, hanging out,
staying connected to whatever the focus is. So I'm using breathing as the example here. And so this also kind of being aware of the subjective way we are staying with the breath. Kind of a corner of the mind is aware. Okay, here and back on the breath. Let's sustain it, let's stay rooted here. Let's surf on this. And I think of it sometimes like riding a scooter, that the first one coming back is kind of like coming back and then kicking with one foot, the scooter to roll it along. And that the sustaining attention is getting carried on the momentum of that. And staying there until you need to push again, and push again. Comeback, comeback, start again, it's a little kick with a foot kind of. And then you glide and you hang in there with a glide. The difference with the scooters, scooter runs out of its momentum pretty quickly. When we glide on the sustaining the attention, we actually kind of begin staying longer and longer. It's like we catch a long, long wave and we're just really there on it, now we're scooting downhill a little bit and are really kind of just staying staying staying. And so we stay longer and longer. So this sustained initial attention and the sustained attention is part of the subjective dimension of how we are as we're meditating.

And so it takes a while to get the hang of how to pay attention to this and do this. So we don't trip over ourselves or try too hard or strain or make it more complicated than it needs to be. They're meant to be very, very simple things. And it's best not to be trying too hard. Remembering that a lot of this concentration has to do with letting go. And so it's partly just letting go into the sustaining attention. Letting go into beginning again.

The third of these subjective experiences has to do with a sense of joy, delight, pleasure. That kind of feeling of satisfaction, a glow, appreciation, gladness. And so all these kinds of different kind of nuances with different feelings of well being, they begin to set in as the mind kind of gets focused. As the mind gets really settled and involved. Kind of like reading a really good novel or doing a craft they're really involved in. There's a kind of very simple pleasure and delight and doing it that is not so dramatic. It isn't like the craftsperson or the reader of the book is savoring and looking for that joy, It's just kind of there in the background. So as we get really, really focused, like on the breathing, this sense of delight comes up or joy. A pleasure that comes along. And very likely you can use that supporting actor as a cheerleader, as a support, as an encouragement. Yes, this is good. Kind of with peripheral attention or kind of let that kind of marshal your attention to stay. It's good. I think of it as a biofeedback system. That the more we focus on the breathing, the more this, at some point, this joy kicks in. And so there's a feedback loop where one gets stronger and supports the other to get stronger. And probably there's some neurological chemicals that come into play, serotonin or something that comes into play with this kind of focus that is part of the reason this joy factor kicks in.

And then the fourth is a more sublime or subtle or maybe more embodied kind of well being, which tradition calls sometimes sukha. Suka, I like to translate as happiness. A deeper kind of satisfying content kind of happiness, that is deeper, more satisfying, less energetic than earlier kinds of delight and joy, pleasure.

And then the fifth of these five jhanic factors is sometimes called one pointedness. It kind of also means kind of a gathering together, coming together around one. Everything's going to come to a head, or come to the gathered around this one point or this one place. And so it's not a laser focus, but it's more
like everything's embracing and here with the breathing. And just the breathing is like all there is, just boom. Really here present.

So these are kind of subjective experiences. And there's an art then as we develop concentration. And can be used a little bit in mindfulness too to keep this kind of in mind a little bit as a way to encourage us, and interest us, and keep us more right here in the present moment. And putting aside our concerns. And as I said in the meditation earlier, whatever concerns you have that nothing to do with meditation and the present moment, maybe imagine that for the minutes you're meditating, you put them down and put them on the floor next to you. And they're nearby, you still can take care of them, you can pick them up when you need them. Your concerns, know you're there for it, you're not having to abandon them. And then maybe they can just be quiet for a while, while you really focus here and get into.

So the five factors are: the initial application of mind, coming back, starting again; the sustained attention; joy, pleasure, joy, delight. And the fourth is a more sublime, settled sense of satisfaction, satisfactory, happy satisfaction. And then the fifth is this one pointedness, this one gathering together to just this.

So, maybe as you go through your day today, even in daily activities you can see if you give yourself completely over the activity you're doing at any given time. Just really do it in a loving, relaxed kind of way. But just put aside your concerns. Can you see how these five jhanic factors might come into play? And in doing that, maybe you'll also enjoy yourself more and find a certain kind of delight or deep satisfaction in just being present and alive in the activity of the moment.

So thank you very much.