So good morning and welcome back to our fifth day on the intuitive meditation Part Two and talking about the hindrances, and we have about five minutes before the scheduled time to start. And if any of you would like to take the opportunity for a question, I'm happy to try to respond. Maybe they'll also be some time at the end, maybe test, you can ask some questions, but the chat on the chat here. After many years that you have practice, what would you say the impact of practice has been on your life? Oh, there's been so many big impacts. I was going to say with one few words. I would say I'm much happier than I used to be. Hmm, I think that's something that feels more profound to say is That there's much more peace here. And so that piece that's kind of lives inside of me, that's somehow more is a kind of happiness but maybe more a little more profound than conventional ideas of happiness. Good morning, Gil, could you please share practical tips on what to do when you try to control breathing while meditating? So I like to say that the first first and foremost is that the practice of mindfulness is to use whatever's happening to cultivate greater clarity of attention, clarity of recognition of what's happening. And so it doesn't really matter for the purposes of mindfulness, whether or not you're controlling the breathing. So some people when they realize that just go along, controlling the breath, but they just use that as a convenient object to cultivate mindfulness with and with that kind of ease and not being bothered by it or troubled by it. Paradoxically, sometimes it just relaxes by itself. Over time, as soon as we're kind of navigating, negotiating, fighting it, it tends to make the controlling stronger. And other kind of an added part of that is to not only be mindful of it, but become a connoisseur of a controlled breath, really kind of feel the ins and outs of it feel where it's most
controlled, where it’s least controlled. What emotions come along what attitudes come along
with the control, just kind of make it all kind of an area of study. And then in terms of maybe
maybe not doing it if you can, sometimes, I found it useful when I used to control my breath, to
focus on the movement of my back ribcage. That back ribcage is much more passive, the muscles
of the diaphragm aren’t really directly active there. So, my tuning in there I was focusing on
something which wasn’t being controlled, just kind of going along. And that made it easier to
relax. Some people just avoid the breath and tirely and find some other objects of attention.
Listening to sound sounds are always in the present moment, and relaxing the hearing muscle
that in a sense, and just taking in sounds receptively. And almost as if your hearing is as wide
awake as where the sounds come from, and just relax and open and spacious, and just completely
ignore the breathing. Some people focus on other parts of the body, rather than the breathing.
There’s something called in Burma called sitting touching. And that was to feel the physical
contact of the body against some fluffy to the body against the floor of the mat. And then
alternate between that and feeling the hands touching each other. If you have the hands together
or your hands touching your thighs, and maybe in the same room, not not coordinated with
breathing, but in the same kind of ease, maybe an easygoing way, kind of alternating between
sitting and feeling the contact point so the body against the floor, and then touch Touching
feeling where the hands are touching. And that again, ignoring. So these are ways of ignoring the
breathing. And then over time, you can maybe return to the breath when yours gets more settled
and focus. And the active busy mind controlling mind is not operating. And then one more thing
to say about starting at the back rib cage, I used to kind of imagine I was doing that I was kind of
sneaking up on the breath coming from the back, and then kind of when I got settled there, then
bringing it in from the back door in a sense, and gently and and then I would not start, I wouldn't
control the breath so much. So those are a couple of things and so and then. So I saved one
person’s for today’s Today’s topic is slaughter interpret torpor, someone’s asking you about coffee
drinking. And when you say something needs to be addressed, what does it mean? So these are
both question Maybe we’ll come out today and they’re talking about sloth and torpor. And so I’m
happy to be here with you and and seeing your names and So, welcome back to the second day
of this eight part introduction to mindfulness meditation part two, and it’s building on you know,
the part one nine week course that I recently taught here. And, and the topic for this part too are
the hindrances, those things which challenge our meditation practice. And it’s considered to be
some of them. Not all the challenges for sure. But as the mind gets settled, even starts getting
approaching concentration. There’s something about these Five which are pretty primal, pretty
basic, that don’t have to can operate even without a lot of stories and concerns from our daily life
operate, you know, coming into play, but I just kind of almost occur with the moment to moment
experience itself with breathing or with anything that’s happening in the moment. And so, the five
hindrances are sensual desire, ill will, what’s usually called sloth and torpor, restlessness and
worry, and doubt. And these five, there’s number of similes, that the metaphors that Buddha used
though, that to describe these, and one set of them goes that were strong sensual desire. It’s like
looking into a body of water upon that’s been dyed red, and now there was a Greek city in English
we say seeing through rose colored glasses. We look at your reflection in behind that's read itself will be read. And, you know you'll see yourself that way and so you don't see yourself as you are but you see yourself through the promise the alert of the central desire if ill will, is like the pond boiling over with heat. So the heat the energy of ill will is like into boiling water and you can feel the energy of it and bubbling over. And then sloth and torpor is like into a lake a pond that's covered with algae. And with covered algae, you can't really see your reflection either. And, and going through it this kind of like a little bit of a fight. It's hard to get through it and get pulled down, pulled back. There's a lot of resistance operating when you're trying to go through algae and certainly you can't see and then restlessness and worry is like the pond to the lake, the cover of the lake is the surface of like, is like the wind, strong wind blowing across it and it's all churned up. And so again, you can't see your reflection because of all the churn churning up you can't see clearly. And doubt is like a lake or pond that's filled with mud so the water is very muddy and lots of mud in it. And to make your way through a very, very muddy pond or lake, it's really slow going it's slogging you get you step in your foot gets kind of sucked in and takes a lot of work to pull it out and only to get sucked in more. You pull out one foot, the other foot sinks in deeper and slow going. So doubt is a very slow going and it pulls us into it. So five metaphors to get a little sense of what these are. And all of the all these metaphors. One of the commonalities of them is we can have trouble seeing things as they are seeing ourselves self reflection or seeing anything when we're trying to see it through that kind of water. So, the topic for today is sloth and torpor. And this is probably a Victorian English translation. I sometimes like resistance and lethargy, to kind of capture a little bit more the inner psychological meaning of these sloth and torpor slot as more physical, physical lethargy or heaviness or slowness or weariness. And, and torpor is mental. It's kind of a mental heaviness, dullness, mental fog, and so we can't really get going, we can't really see like that when the mind, dullness and the mind. Now sloth and torpor belongs to a little family of things, which is involves low energy, and practice. And so it's important to distinguish between the different kinds of low energy that can happen in practice. The first is plain and simple, physical tiredness, and this natural to get tired. And, and in many people in the modern world are so so sleep deprived. They probably need to sleep more than they need to meditate. And so if that's the case and trying to meditate, then might be really sleepy. And certainly I've done plenty of my share of falling asleep in meditation. And some of it was because not getting enough sleep. The other reason for kind of a dullness that can kind of look like sloth and torpor is as meditation deepens as we get more concentrated, it's very easy to get an imbalance between calmness and energy engagement. And if the mind gets calmer and calmer, but there's not sufficient energy to kind of keep it alert. First people will get into hypnagogic, chaotic, chaotic states stream like states. And it's usually it's very pleasant at this point, but kind of pleasant kind of dreamlike images and things will occur and they can be very alluring, very captivating. One of the earliest experiences I remember of doing this in meditation, was sitting in the evening by myself meditating, after a full day of meditation. And, and sitting there, and being convinced that I was following the breath in breath and out breath. I was right there for everyone. And at the same time, there was this huge scene in front of my eyes. That image that I was creating
hallucinate that host nation, but kind of like a visualization of this whole theater with a stage and people doing something on the stage. And somehow My mom is my sleepy mind had confused the what was happening to stage my breathing and they’re wondering the same and at some point I just went to sleep, because you know, went to bed. So but even even when we’re not sleepy, there can be this very calm state, but we kind of soothe ourselves into deeper, deeper meditation, and there isn’t enough alertness. So if that’s what’s happening, that thing is to bring more energy into the system, sit up straighter, maybe open the eyes. Use mental noting a little bit more energetically just to kind of keep get bringing more alertness to the mind, brighten the mind when instructions to sit in front of a window where there’s sunlight or a bright light to kind of have even the eyes close to have light coming into the eyes and maybe can awaken things a little bit. And so the idea that we need more energy because we are To calm it’s also possible to have too much energy and what we need is calm. So finding that balance is kind of part of the art of meditation. So those are the first two three causes for tiredness when we sit when is not enough sleep the other is imbalance of as we practice. And the third is the sloth and torpor and sloth and torpor has nothing to do with not having sleep, you can add all the sleep you need, feel really refreshed, all the conditions are right, sit down to meditate and things get heavy and dull and kind of weary. And has nothing to do with kind of the balance of things. And it just, there’s a deep kind of thing. In fact that the, I think of all these Henry’s is this strategies of how to deal with challenges in life that are not so functional, not too helpful these strategies, and one of the sloth and torpor is a strategy of the system not necessarily consciously of shutting down of going doll of becoming wary. And it can be it takes the form of discouragement, weariness, disappointment, dullness kind of a depressed state. There’s many kinds of ways we could things got dampened down for us. But it has to do with some kind of attitude. We have some reaction we have to what’s going on. And a common way with tacos is a reaction to frustrated desire. We feel like we’re not getting what we want. So we just kind of shut down and feel disappointed, discouraged, a little hopeless, perhaps. And we just give up kind of a giving up of energy and just like, oh, why bother? It could be that there’s ill will. There’s kind of resistance and hostility a little bit very, very faint to what’s happening. that lends itself to this idea of why bother? Why should I it’s too hard. No, I don’t want to do that. Why should I I think when I was a kid I used to have that when my parents would take me certain places, some some long drives we had that gets so sloth and torpor, I just oh this was such a so boring or going to some stores like clothing stores I really didn’t like and I would be filled with sloth and torpor was like, difficult to kind of drag my feet across the floor. You know, it’s like so weary and tired and so impossible to be there and I must have been I must have been a drag my mother because I was so kind of like an attitude of weariness, tired slot. And it was an attitude. It was a resistance that was going on. Because many of us live by the caffeine of the soul, but live you know that certain things like desire and aversion keeps us going and energized. Sometimes if we’re used to that, then the absence of that can cause sloth and torpor, kind of a psychological weariness and dullness and lack of inspiration, lack of motivation, that’s their excitement or interest. And it’s a in that case, it’s a transition time. And sometimes rather than working with it, we have to be very patient and work through it. Another thing that
can cause sloppy interpreter arise is that anxieties also kind of a caffeine of the soul, that some people are constantly energized by their fear. And it keeps them alert and keeps them looking and aware and all that. And if in meditation to the fear abates, then we discover the underlying weariness, that's their, their underlying even exhaustion that can be there from chronic fear or chronic anger or chronic desire wanting. And sometimes there's a like I talked about last time kind of recovery time that's needed. It's not a problem, but we have to be patient with it. And, and then there's other reasons for sloth and torpor. It's kind of different ads Two that come into play. one form of tics is boredom. And it's useful to realize that boredom, nothing in the world is inherently boring. It's the mind that makes it boring. It's an attitude of the mind that boredom is an activity of the mind. The mind is actually doing something to make itself board and evaluation a judgment. And so, so that can make us weary and tired and kind of give up our energy. And, and one of the very sad things that can be boring, is that if people are praised, or if people are criticized, that's energizing. But when there's nothing in it, or against the set, nothing is in it for the self or against the self or self image. And we get nothing out of it for ego for self enhancement or being praised or something. Are we we are getting our desires met? There's nothing challenging us, challenging our self concept challenging our conceit challenging our ego challenging our desires. There's nothing then it some people will will turn off, they'll shut out there'll be boring. Oh, this is such a boring so boring person. This is a boring event. And there's a kind of a dullness and dropping of interest. And the idea that things would only interest us and give us energy. If it does something for us personally in our self concept, our conceit our ego, or, or our desires or something is kind of sad. And part of mindful life is to be able to come into the world with interest and curiosity and care and respect from a natural vitality. That's not dependent on something outside not or something from the outside but also not dependent on things like desires or aversions or fear to be there. I've known people who've intentionally gone to make themselves afraid, like horror movies, for example, because it was energizing, and they like the sense of aliveness and energy that came. So it's probably fine. It's probably innocent enough in and of itself. But this idea of always being propped up by these things, and and then what happens when they all goes away and we're just left with ourselves. That's what we want in meditation. We want to finally be able to be left alone, completely leave or leave ourselves to ourselves. We want to discover what's here for us, who we are what operates in us, when we no longer are propped up or supported or stimulated from everything outside. Or even our psychology, the surface psychology of our mind from the inside. But we want to see all this what's goes on here, what's happening here, what drives me what motivates me, and eventually kind of go through the layers of the mind the heart and discover some analysis. vitality and natural lightness that we're capable of. So, Bella, the five practices for working were the hindrances with sloth and torpor, the letting it be being still, with it is certainly interesting and sometimes it's important to really let it be and and so we can examine it step two, and learning how to let it be not to be bored with sloth and torpor, not to be angry with it not to try to be pulled into the world of desire because they're sloth and torpor, but just allow it to be. And some sloth and torpor zz are actually a very important part of life. I think some people who are depressed, might think of
themselves as having sloth and torpor, no energy, no inspiration, no motivation. I’m not saying all depressions are a good thing. But I get the sense that most people these days are very impatient with their depression, they because it’s Trouble, I think there’s something wrong, something personally failing or something, they shouldn’t be there for depressed. There are times when depression is actually very important. It’s part of the deeper processing deeper, unfolding deeper way in which the heart, the psyche, is working something out. And only by giving us ourselves lots of fallow time, can we start seeing what’s deeper and deeper and what the deeper vitality deeper motivations that went on to come by. And so we don’t always know what’s being worked out, when we’re kind of depressed. If it’s, you know, you know, in common none, not a regular depression and constant but there are times when that’s actually quite important to give ourselves time to fallow time and let something develop and not to make the situation worse by being reactive to the depression. So whatever the reason, sloth and torpor is there, you want to let it be a little bit just to see I think recognize it. Sometimes is letting it be too long. It’s not so useful for sloth and torpor. Sometimes more is needed. And sloth and torpor perhaps more than the other hindrances, do well with some kind of serious reflection. actually thinking about what’s going on contemplating it, not in meditation so much. But if sloth and torpor is a regular part of your life, you might go for walks, you might journal talk to a friend to see, what is it that just kind of explore it? What are the attitudes there? What are the beliefs there? What’s your relationship to the sloth and torpor? Why might it be there? What’s a cup? Where’s that coming from? And it’s not that it’ll reveal itself quickly. But sometimes it’s sloth and torpor. It’s like a little bit of a message, little bit of a door. What’s really going on here? What’s deeper here? And since we don’t want to use meditation, for a lot of contemplation and thinking, do it another time. Do it you know, spend some time really understanding what’s happening if you can. And then examining sloth and torpor, be curious about it with respect. And sometimes I’ve done this sometimes with sloth and torpor and also with physical tiredness is to really get curious about what is it that are what’s this symptoms in the body mind of being tired, what are the sensations? What’s the dullness and heaviness in the eyes and the cheeks? The grittiness sometimes was sad for me in the eyes that I feel when I’m really tired. Where is it there sinking feeling? What happens in the shoulders for me sometimes sloth and torpor, as a kind of lead and heavy lead and feeling sometimes in my body. In the mind, it can feel like a lot of dullness and cloudiness almost in the mind and difficult to get going. Or if I do kind of do mindful mindfulness. It doesn’t really feel like it’s working. It’s not really connecting to anything and this feeling of kind of vacuous pneus of mindfulness of attention or absence of it, or dullness of it. These are all ways that can feel they’re all uncomfortable to feel this way. But part of the, you know, kind of the adventure of mindfulness is to be curious and feel the discomfort and really be with it and really get into it. And what that does, we’re beginning to shift our attention away from reacting, or being discouraged by sloth and torpor, to bringing some choice and control and agency, into the mind into awareness to explore and look at it. And occasionally, that kind of exploration of energy is all we need to kind of wake up to go further. Someone asked earlier about caffeine drinking coffee, and sloth and torpor. I think that within reason it can be fine to drink coffee to be alert in a natural way kind of
in more of a natural way. Over caffeinated is not good for meditation. But an ordinary day there's little sleepiness or little tiredness or even a little bit of sloth and torpor, and the caffeine kind of bumps you up a little bit so that you have a more productive meditation. For some people, that's fine. I didn't eat drink coffee for probably the first 30 years, at least of my meditation practice. And I seem to have done fine. The, the, what I find I drink coffee now in the morning. But on retreat, it's often good not to drink anything. And then people have to kind of bet then best to prepare themselves some days ahead of time, so they don't go through the withdrawal at the retreat. But as the mind settles and get quieter. We don't want any kind of artificial stimulation of the mind. Because of this quiet, very quiet, peaceful, natural vitality that comes. It's nice just to allow that to begin living rather than having their little Too much activation of the mind and this is a very This is a very personal issue of caffeine and coffee and what to do not to do. So, so, Bella, so, let it be examine it, feel it, and examining it also means looking at some of the attitudes, some of the beliefs that are operating and the boredom, the conceits, the, you know where we get our energy from and what what our needs are to be stimulated and have skipped something and have something all the time and, and begin exploring that but also exploring, is there anything that you would identify in yourself, that could be a natural vitality, and natural kind of energy that seems to well up or be there may be quieter than then how you usually are, but sometimes recognizing a sweeter, deeper flow of energy and vitality, maybe physically In the body, and allowing that to surface in a deeper a peaceful way, in a way it never has before can somehow wake up or move us beyond the sloth and torpor. Part of the investigation of it the examination of it is to feel if sloth and torpor is resistance. Is it a giving up? lethargy, I think sometimes comes from a give up, it's hopeless, I can't do it. And so these attitudes I can't do it. It's hopeless. It's just too difficult. Our slot producing resistance. No, I don't want to do it. I can't do it. It's too hard for me that resist them not going to do it can also take the form of lethargy. This examination is also important because occasionally sleepiness tiredness sloth and torpor is a symptom of our of going asleep turning off going numb So we don't have to address or be aware of difficult emotions we're experiencing. Sometimes you see, especially with very young kids like babies, if babies are overstimulated, sometimes they fall asleep. It's almost like a protective mechanism to they can't handle all the stimulation, the noise or something. It's a bit go asleep. As adults, the overstimulation of difficult emotions, difficult memories that come up can be difficult, painful things can be too much for our system to handle. And so our psychophysical system will fall asleep and go doll are good numb. And that's not necessarily wrong. It might be your inner inner life understands that you're not ready to really feel the difficult emotions that are there. And I'm a no and I don't encourage anyone to rush past that or rush into experiencing what's difficult or what's been unattended and all that it's good time. All when you wait until you Ready, wait until you're ready then maybe only do it in small dosages. There's no need to rush No need to open all the floodgates. Take your time until you really feel ready if that's the case and then lessening the third step Abella perhaps are sloth and torpor, the lessening is, is primarily takes the form of increasing, increasing the energy level. Maybe do walking meditation instead of sitting meditation, and that walking gets a nice energy going, and maybe then more alertness to see
more clearly what’s going on. or do some fast walking before you sit. Sit up straighter. Open your eyes when you meditate. Use mental noting. This is one of the great uses of the mental notes which is to say a one word one word thought in your mind that labels or identifies what’s happening in the moment. And if you do that little bit of energy that can begin to brighten the mind, clarify the mind. And then letting go. It isn’t so much we can let go of sloth and torpor. If we really see if our mind really sees what it is we’re holding on to what the attachment is. And then oh, that’s what it is. And I’ve had sloth and torpor and meditation. And, and only when they identified what was going on, did the whole body release something. And remember once being had a lot of sloth and torpor, feeling kind of off and lousy. And so I laid down on a couch and just felt the experience and felt experience. And at some point, I recognized that I was depressed, and the word depression came up. And as soon as I recognized what it was something released inside, some resistance, perhaps are some bracing myself for something and that made the world of difference just to have that real These happen when I clearly identified recognize what was going on. So recognition, letting go letting go of the attachments letting go of the attitudes we might have, if it’s possible, and then appreciating, appreciating the absence of sloth and torpor. And this can mean more than just appreciating it could also mean to examine that what is that natural vitality? What does it feel like the energy in the body where what’s activated in Nice way? without there being slopping torpor? What’s it like having a clarity of like a clear pond, a clarity of energy, vitality, in the system in the chest and the shoulders in the belly in the head? What’s that like? Because I appreciating and recognizing it, it actually supports it and and strengthens it and helps us to recognize it in the future. So it becomes a resource for the meditation practice. So that was a lot I hope that you haven’t gotten sloth and torpor on me hearing all that discussion about it. So we will now do our meditation. And if you feel like you’re now just spin you know sleep be this listening to all this you might want to stand for a minute stretch, check out a little bit in order to be a little bit refreshed. And and then you can take your seat again. And then before you do too much work and changing your posture any more than you have Just tune into yourself right now. Notice what’s happening for you without any attempt to try to now meditate on your breathing or anything else, just kind of check in with yourself in the broad general way How are you? How do you feel? What’s happening for you? And is there any way that what’s happening for you? Feels either doe tired draining hors energizing and alert and with interest and maybe even excitement in that range. What how you are right now where do you fit more in the adult side, the low energy side, more in the high energy side. Allow it to be whatever way it is just for a minute or so. And just explore it and feel it as if you’re getting to know it for the first time and you know, trying to make it go away, you’re just getting to recognize it. And then you might begin with adjusting your posture, sitting up maybe a little bit straighter. So there can be maybe a little bit more energy of alertness. Gently closing your eyes and then you might begin doing the three Breath journey. Just do three breaths, counting them from one to three. And then you might do the same thing again, another three breath journey this time, breathing a little bit more fully. Sometimes a deeper breaths can be a little bit energizing, which is nice, maybe, which is good to count three breaths, but gently take some deeper breaths. And then let your breathing returned to normal. And if
there's any obvious places of tension in your body that are easy to relax, you might relax them. 
Maybe as you exhale, relaxing muscles of the face, relaxing the shoulders, relaxing the belly. very
occasionally relaxing into where their sloth and torpor allows us to relax through it allows
something to release some tension or holding. That's part and parcel of the slop and torpor. Look
through your body and mind you so anything that you think needs to be released, let go. softened
and then within your body I think yourself experience How the body experiences breathing the
movements of your body as you're breathing, changing sensations as you breathe, perhaps as
you exhale and see if you can either relax, let go of your thinking or quiet your thinking As you
exhale so the mind gets quieter and still there. Let it go quiet. You’re thinking, the exhale and let
there be an alertness, clarity and then feeling, experiencing the inhale. And then as a little
exercise sitting quietly with your eyes closed, explore through your body to notice Where is it? The
most satisfying kind of energy, vitality. A lightness of sensations are part of your body that seems
to express the best. Not over activated, but something that’s satisfying and maybe both
energizing and satisfying and settling. Maybe an easy vitality in your body or your mind or your
heart in the future Feeling that vitality in your body. Maybe breathe through that or imagine your
breath goes through that or comes from that returns to it. Letting the thinking mind Be quiet,
softer, more gentle. So you can better feel and sense and experience breathing and this place of
vitality of energy In the experience of breathing itself as you breathe in and breathe out, is there
any particular phase of the cycle that breathing in and out, it has a nice energy to it, nice vitality
to it. Maybe even a pleasantness and vitality. Some people it might be in some part of the in
breath, some people some part of the out breath. But part of the cycle has a nicest form a vitality
aliveness And perhaps whatever vitality or nice energy, no matter how small it is, maybe as you
breathe, you can gently allow to spread a little bit to grow or and to help the mind become
quieter and Still Quiet mind that is energized or alert or clear, clear to what’s happening in And
I’ll look around and is there anything at all that corresponds to sloth and torpor, any dullness or
anything that feels like it’s draining or weary. Too much any resistance or boredom or any kind
any lethargy or weariness. It could just be in a small place within the middle part of your body,
your mind your heart. And then as if your awareness can be very permissive give permission for
that experience to be there. sloth and torpor to be there, let it be. But feel that can be with it.
examine it a little bit. Get to know it better. Are you the way that And as you feel whatever degree
of sloth and torpor that might be, is there anything you can let go of in relationship to it? Any
releasing of something that releases a natural vitality so it’s not dampened down. What can you
let go? So natural energy has a chance to flow Letting go then allowing maybe a natural vitality,
natural vitality of attention to be receptive to breathing. Then vitality and natural energy that’s
part of breathing has a chance to flow and appear together with a natural vitality of attention
being present for a short while for another minute or so. And then to end this sitting. You can take
a few long slow deep breaths, maybe three deep breaths. Feeling your body, your body against
the chair your cushion. And then when you're ready you can open your eyes. So because sloth and
torpor are generally uncomfortable because they’re kind of a, you know, get them away obstacle
of clarity of being a purely being present in meditation. There can be a strong bias against them
strong kind of feeling that they're a problem. One of the principles of mindfulness and the obstacles to mindfulness meditation is to drop let go of the idea of obstacle. Let go the idea that anything's a problem. From one point of view, they can be a problem if you have, from that point of view. So it's not like I'm dismissing that mindset. There's that there are other mindsets, other attitudes that are useful. And the one for mindfulness practice is that rather than seeing something as the obstacle, we see it as the subject of mindfulness. So we turn it upside down in a sense and make it the practice of mindfulness rather than the obstacle to it. So if there is lots of sloth and torpor, rather than seeing as a problem, we turn towards it to experience and be with it. There's no need to see it as a personal terms, like it's a personal failing or I'm wrong because I have it. Any of these hindrances or all these hindrances are ordinary human phenomena all human beings have them and the different intensities in different ways, but don't take it as as a personal failing. It just comes with being a human being and when we have challenges, these hindrances are the strategy sometimes they're not so helpful but strategies to try to do our best to try to figure out how to deal with it. One of the interesting questions to ask yourself, if there's a lot of sloth and torpor elements a regular thing comes over and over again, is to ask the question. And maybe in meditation, you kind of it's a contemplative question, which means that you, you drop the question into the heart into the mind, and then just see what responds. See what emotions feelings, thoughts, ideas, surface on their own. It's not a question then to ask and then try to analyze it. And so the question is If I if I did not have all this sloth and torpor, what would I be experiencing instead? And sometimes that's enough to open the gate to show what's going on more deeply. It might be to feel sadness and grief. It might be in to feel confusion and we have a lot of doubt and uncertainty. It might be there's a lot of fear. There might be something deep, something really deep that we're trying to address we're trying to avoid that we're resisting. And so this question what would be what would I be experiencing if it wasn't for sloth and torpor? If you're a system if your mind and heart is ready, just asking the question and receptive way receiving the question. And receptively might be enough to tour something to be revealed. So maybe to ask yourself that in the middle of meditation, if you sit for 20 minutes, maybe have a little bell that goes off after 10 minutes, and then ask yourself the question. Generally, I think of all these things, including sloth and torpor, as things to respect. To have a lot of respect for our system, our mind our hearts, our bodies, is really trying to do what's best to work with very difficult materials, challenging stuff, stresses in our life, and to not kind of make it harder by judging it or negatively. But see just really just positive messages all for the purposes of mindfulness. It all everything is an opportunity, to deepen to open up to find out How to be free. And if at a minimum, free in this free inhabiting it, to have a certain freedom and ease even to have sloth and torpor, that is a small step in the direction of freedom. So, I know the sloth and torpor is can be a particularly strong for some people and some people at certain phases of their life. And I hope that I convey that it's real that you can have a lot of respect for it, a lot of care, but at the same time, not give into it, not collapse into it, but to have some agency and bring up curiosity or practice to work with it. So now if you'd like we have about eight minutes left. If some of you would like to ask a question I'd be happy to try to answer and maybe some of you have particular
questions or issues around the sloth and torpor thing that you'd like to ask. And as I kind of said earlier, I kind of think of sloths as being more like lethargy which is an attitude kind of I think of, and then torpor as being more like resistance. But you know, maybe each of you might have your own association with these Victorian English words sloth and torpor. So I noticed I do much better with guided meditations than on my own. I think that is not the best practice and the ideas. Thank you for your talks. I think that is not the best practice. The best practice is what is helpful for you and particular time. So if what's most helpful is guided meditations at this time as a beginner, by all means it's be helpful to get this way of learning. It's a way of understanding the instructions. It's a way of getting pulled in. And so to get some general idea to get into the territory of meditation for some people, it's really helpful to do guided meditations. When there's a lot of stress in our lives and difficulty it might be very helpful. And, but so just a principle is that sooner or later, you want to also learn how not to require guided meditations. Sooner or later, you want to be able to be self reliant, and learn how to be free and meditate mindfully, without any kind of external support for it. But once you've learned that there might still be times in your life where it's nice to do guided meditations, might be an enjoyable thing to do, it might be particular guided meditations have their own lessons are so many different types. So you can how to be relaxed around it. So try to do it in order Do you have advice and distinguishing more mental and body components of sloth and torpor tiredness? Yeah I don't know if my what I have to say will be useful, but the bodily components is really feels physical. It feels it feels like a heaviness in the body or a tiredness or a dullness in the body. There can be sometimes in the body can you feel fine, but it really is the strong component part is mental resistance it feels dull, the sensations are dull. So a physical sensations or physical sensations of dullness, the mental is mental sensations. They both have it have to do it slot interpret have to do with an added mental attitude. So sooner or later, maybe you start noticing there's a mental attitude connected to it. That's those sensations. So in that sense, maybe all slot they're all forms of self and torpor. Have a mental component to it. So that's where we find our freedom. Sometimes I nod off many times during a meditation, after half a dozen, I sometimes get up. Is that okay? Well, depends how often it's happening and what you your analysis of the situation. It might be, you're really physically tired and you better off, take a nap, before you meditate to do a power nap, if that works for you 1015 minutes and then get up and meditate. And maybe then you're clear. But maybe you get to take a nap and you're completely clear and you get meditate and you still doze off, then it might be a form of resistance, kind of like little babies who go to sleep when there's too much stimulation. And if you feel like you're interested in going deeper into it, you could ask yourself the question, you know, what would I be experiencing if I wasn't nodding off? What am I resisting? Maybe something shows itself and the other possibility is If you keep nodding off half a dozen times, dozen times, don't give up your meditation. Don't think of it as a bad meditation. Maybe learn what it takes, figure out what it takes to be sincere and practicing the best you can. And being at peace with the fact that you're nodding off, not making it a problem. Maybe your meditation is then nodding off meditation, you're going to become the world class expert on what it's like to not off just before you're not off just after your note off what goes on there for you.
What’s happened, then you understand it deeply. And it might be there was a time in my meditation many years ago. I would come back from work and then meditate 530 or six or something for 40 minutes, and the first 20 minutes. The weariness of it, a baby caught up to me. And I would spend the first 20 minutes just nodding off kind of constantly. And then it was kind of like I was taking a nap. was born It was kind of like a high quality nap but wasn’t trying to take a nap. wasn’t trying to get into it. But then after 20 minutes I passed, and that was so alert and concentrated, that it was really, you know, wow, what a difference. So I had trouble trying to find out where I was feeling my body. It’s all over. Then I was thinking about that being all over. What is that about? Maybe it’s curiosity. Maybe it’s worry, and trying to understand something. Maybe it’s over reliance on intellect to try to figure out but all over the body. Yeah. That’s completely valid to feel it as a global thing. Just feel like Oh, is this you know, if you feel the totality of the best you can. And as you kind of hang out with the totality of sloth and torpor in the body, then you might ask yourself Not so much to analyze it, but say, is there any one place that’s most compelling and the one place that’s most active where it’s strongest, or you know where there’s the most collapse or as most slot, and then you can bring your attention to that place where it’s concentrated. If it’s equal everywhere, just, that’s fine. Just breathe with it, breathe through it, just feel it fully. Let’s see how to release jumps around. So I can’t necessarily come back so easily, how to read release continual self doubt. We’ll talk about doubt in a couple of days. But to answer very briefly to its important question, maybe releasing it is not the first thing you should do. Maybe the first thing you should do, if it’s continue or self doubt is experiment with doubting the doubt. Just do better maybe it’s do a better job doubting and, and don’t be just sat at satisfied with the degree of doubt that you’re doing and like self doubt, doubt the self doubt and will tell him more in a few days. I don’t know if this counts, but I sleep too much. I often feel a need to sleep more, but I often feel worse after. So I so I certainly, you know, want to be very careful and respectful of that kind of question. I don’t know what’s going on, physically, emotionally, psychologically. That, you know, I can’t really know many possibilities. But I do know that for some people, that sleep is kind of an escape. It’s kind of like life is too much or feeling or too much psychology is too much is kind of escaped And, and then that kind of sleep can feel like too much afterwards Actually, we feel dulled dollar because of it. And a wonderful way and wonderful, important way of trying to find your way with all these things rather than the teachers, you know, assuming they know or saying something is to experiment. mindfulness practice does really well with trial and error. So you might try if you haven’t already, try finding a day when you’re not working not doing a lot of things maybe a day off and then try not sleeping so much and see what that’s like. And maybe do something nice for yourself that day. And see if that doing nice would you still get sleepy if you’re doing a nice thing? Or try meditating instead of sleeping and see what comes alive. What what what you discover that way. same person asks, Is there any way to work with this with mindfulness neuro to have healthier sleep? You know, some people, their sleep is pretty restless, their sleep, there’s a lot of tension and stress, because people carry a lot of anxiety and worry and anger and all kinds of things within them. That as the mind quiets down the surface kind of cover what covers it or keeps it at bay, kind of settles away, and the deeper anxieties we
have, will surface. And I have a particular concern I have for a relative than when that's a concern, concern comes up for me. I wake up, it seems like I wake up at 2pm and 2am. And so if I wake up at 2am in the morning, I know I'm concerned about that relative it's like kind of, you know, during the day, I'm busy and doing things and it doesn't really surface in the same way. So one thing to do is to Meditate before you go to sleep at night. Some people will do loving kindness meditation or go make sure they meditate in a way that makes them feel really cozy and safe and comfortable. And if fears are really big issue, then also have a pair in the morning. So when you wake up, you wake up to a situation that's inviting and nice and satisfying. Maybe have breakfast ready or something's ready or just clean or nice. So you both prepared, how you prepare to go to sleep and how you prepare to wake up are all goodness all just good things and, and then do some nice meditation or loving kindness or read something that's very comforting for you and satisfying and inspiring before you go to sleep to see if they can prepare yourself for a nice sleep. What you do just before asleep for the hour before is actually quite can have a big impact. Don't read the news, don't read emails. Just do nice things that are supportive for your inner life. So I'll see if I can do one more. I find sloth and torpor arising after a strong emotion. Yes, sometimes it's you know, we shut down we have enough strong emotion. Sometimes it's kind of self protection. It's a way of kind of recovering and, and just I can't, I can't handle much more now. And or I need to recover, I need to cut I need to do very little. I need to kind of chill and take naps, take care of myself, have food, have tea, drink water. Go for a nice walk. Do something that's kind of refreshing and nice. It could also be that you know that sometimes when there's strong emotion, there can be a lot of tension that builds up in the body and sometimes movement, going for a walk going for a run, dancing, dancing alone in your house. Doing some kind of movement that allows kind of shakes off some of the residual effects of the strong emotions will sometimes help us recover more quickly. But I think that having sloth and torpor after strong emotions is a pretty normal thing and and then you're set to be wise about how to work with it, but I think it's probably your inner system taking care of yourself. I realized that my weariness comes from an inability to meet the incessant demands I make on myself. Endless Oh, yes. The endless desires endless demands, the endless self criticism, the endless endless complaining, the endless anxiety and fear is a huge toll. And there can be such deep weariness and tired and exhausted from that on and on and on doing that and we don't see because there's something about the energy of anxiety, the energy of these demands, that's we're focusing more on the results, what's supposed to happen and what we're afraid of. And we're activated. And that tension is outward direction. We don't see that the the toll, or it is we actually are more alert, sometimes more energized. But it's a kind of caffeine kind of energy. Sooner or later, we might crash. So part of the what mindfulness can do is help us to really see what we do incessantly. And then learning to quiet that down and not do it so much, and find a different way to live. That's not going to be so exhausting. So, my friends, thank you, I probably missed some questions and I value all of them and I'll try to go back now and go back and read all of them so that at least know what you're interested in. And so tomorrow we'll do a restlessness and anxiety. Eddie, and so her worry and thank you and I look forward to tomorrow.