So, greetings, and happy to be here and happy to see that there’s already some questions here.

Before we start, maybe I can take a few. What is the difference between exploring and contemplating thoughts in insight meditation? When is it useful to do each? So a great question.

Both is mindful of thinking, and also is reflective and we’re thinking thinks about things wisely and learns critical thinking skills and, and spends times contemplating subjects, things going on. Things are important for us. The thing is that many people have a strong habit of thinking. And so even when they are going to think about necessary things are useful things to think about. The way that they think, is somewhat addictive. And and it reinforces the strong emphasis that some people have that thinking is important and we’re supposed to think and reinforces the habit. In mindfulness meditation, there’s very little we need to think about. And, and mindfulness meditation is something some teachers like to emphasize the difference difference between content and process. With thinking, and mindfulness, meditation, removing way from content, the things we’re thinking about, to being aware of the process of thinking. And so we’re not using mindfulness meditation to think better think deeply to reflect on things contemplate things, we’re using it to see things and seeing is a little bit more silent than the the mind that thinks and has conversations and and, and we’re not necessarily getting rid of all thinking and not thinking at all. But it’s helpful to maybe distinguish between different kinds or levels of thinking. There’s discursive thinking, which is having a conversation, one’s mind, holding forth and commentary about things. And then much more involved and complicated forms of thinking, thinking about the future thinking about the past, and, and that has really no role in meditation.
practice, it might be other times in our life. And then they're sent very similar kind of thinking, there might still be a little bit like in sentences or multiple sentences that are commentary about the present moment experience. And some of that might be a little bit helpful at times to find our way, but we don't overdo it. We want to let the thinking become even quieter. And the quieter thinking is to think very simple thoughts. Maybe of giving yourself instruction. Like, let me look at me feel the breath now. Where's that inhale? Where's that sensation? What are the sensations of inhale? Where does the inhale begin? What happens if I just kind of ride the inhale from beginning to end? So there's very simple kind of instructional sittings kind of open questions that are encouraging, not more thinking, but are encouraging a quieter observation of what the experience is. And then there's quiet or thinking even still have it'd be a single words that mental notes and so we're using the thinking mind so it's employed. So, but it's very, very simple in support of getting calm and settled and still, the mind can get still there. And that is to use with an inner voice that is quieting or calming voice to have a single word for maybe a breathing in in breathing out Or if there's a desire hindrance that arises in the convoy is not an alarmed voice. Desire. This is desire. This is a version. This is lol, as opposed to own No, it's just terrible. So, so thinking can be part of it. But the the direction, if we're using thinking as part of meditation, it's all for the purpose of becoming quieter and Stiller all for the purpose of seeing in a directly the experience and not thinking about it and and so a lot of discursive thoughts we'd like go up, relax, or if we're caught in it, we focus on the process, the activity of thinking, not the content. Outside of meditation, I hope all of us become wiser and wiser thinkers about things and we take time to go for a walk and and have have profound thoughts. So that maybe took quite a bit of time to answer. And so that's the only question I see. So that's convenient. So then I think we'll start. So, thank you for being here and coming back and this is the second to last day of our intro to minute mindfulness meditation, part two, where we're looking at the hindrances, what hinders clarity, what hinders concentration, hinders, you know, a clear presence and being connected to our life as we live it. And it's important, as I've been saying, to not see the hindrances as necessary as problems but as them something it turns towards if you turn towards a hindrance and really recognize that it's there. It’s no longer hindering. It's a hindrance because it hinders our ability to see what's happening. But if what's happening is, desire is ill will is sloth and torpor is restlessness and worry, or is doubt. And we really see it clearly that this is what's happening, then it's no longer a hindrance. Then it's become it's, it's magic. It's kind of been transformed from the hindrance of desire, to just desire, the hindrance of doubt, hindering doubt, to just out and, and that's the power of mindfulness is to transform something from a hindrance into just being itself and when it is itself, then we can begin finding our freedom with that our wisdom where that then have a different relationship to it. As soon as as long as Something is a hindrance, meaning it's hindering us. It's hindering us. There's no way of getting around that. And, but mindfulness, and that's why we keep coming back with the practice of clear recognition. And we're learning through time, how powerful it is to kind of step back and clearly recognizing this is what's happening. We might at first recognize that this is you know, I'm feel restless, that's terrible. I'm restless and I shouldn't be restless. And what am I going to do about my restlessness? There is a kind of mindfulness but
we're caught up restlessly about the restlessness to step back and see, oh, this is restlessness. And maybe the first time you're kind of still caught in it, oh, this is restlessness. But we keep saying it, this is restlessness or restlessness until we're conscious NFC or this is what's happening. No doubt about it. This is clearly what's happening. There's restlessness, but the knowing or the restlessness has become calm. The knowing of the restlessness is not restless about the restlessness or not versiv to the restlessness or, you know, something, running away from it. So this do over time to learn this art of the part of mindfulness This is density with clear recognition. At that point, a hindrance is no longer hindering. And then we don't call it a hindrance anymore. Then we just call it desire, ill will, sloth and torpor, restlessness, worry, and doubt. The topic for today is doubt. And there's a long tradition of seeing this particular hindrance. Hang on a minute. There's a long tradition of seeing a doubt as the most dangerous of the hindrances. Because in terms of the meditation practice and maybe other things, because doubt, as a way of camouflaging itself, of coming with tremendous authority about what we're doing, questioning it, doubting it, having no confidence about it, not being able to commit to it, thinking there must be another way there must be something else, not this. And, and when doubt is really strong. We don't do the things that we should do things that are healthy for us or beneficial for us. We might give up on things prematurely or unnecessarily. And so from a practice, Buddhist practice point of view, doubt is the most dangerous because if we doubt the practice, or doubt ourselves in the practice, we can give it up. We can leave our meditation, we can just stop meditating. We can just walk away And, and I've known people who’ve had very strong I know one person who had very strong doubt on a retreat. And she said she had a multiple hindrance attack meaning all of them were there but that was a strongest and she was doing a long silent residential retreat. And and at some point she doubted being there the importance of being there being uncertain about being there and decided that is not the place for her and, and decided to leave Flying Cross Country back home in the middle of that flight. She just suddenly woke up and said, Wait a minute. That was a multiple hindrance attack. I got caught up especially in doubt, and I didn't need to do that. But that got the upper hand on me and here I am flying home. So that's a kind of dramatic story. But, but this idea of doubt can be very powerful and very in Have you had a huge influence on us in a way that can cause a lot of suffering and difficulty? So, the word doubt, maybe should maybe another word is uncertainty in decisiveness. So we're uncertain what to do. We don't know what to do. Is it? Is it? Should I be paying attention to my breathing? Or should I be a pence doing loving kindness practice? I don't know what I'm going to do. And should I sit on this retreat or that retreat? Should I read this teacher? Listen to that teacher? What should I do here? Is this the right time to practice? I don't know if this is the right time to practice. Maybe tomorrow is the right time. Tomorrow comes No, I don't know if I'm not sure what's the right. And one of them kind of very insidious doubts. That's kind of interesting, is having a lot of doubt that the practice is going to work that I can do the practice for example, I don't know if I can do This practice is not good practice. I don't know if it's for me. I don't think it's going to work. If we're caught up in the hindrance of doubt, but those thoughts spinning around and going, you know, mile a minute, then it's a self fulfilling prophecy. Of course, it's not going to work if we're spinning out and thoughts
like that. And so there's a kind of a paradox or irony that the very questioning about this or
doubting that this is going to work or they're thinking this is not going to work is very thing that
causes it not to work, so called. And then people give up the practice. I think it's useful to
distinguish between hindering doubt and questioning doubt. there is doubt which is healthy to
have. there is doubt there is health doubt that questions things. Is this really true? What I'm
hearing? I don't know about this. Let me question it and reflect And think study and sci fi, you
know, what's what I think is really works for me what is true? The difference between hindering
doubt and questioning doubt, hindering doubt, disconnects us from experience, pulls us away,
shuts us down, creates a veil creates a distance in our, in our ability to see and be present for
something. Questioning doubt in a healthy way is one that opens us, moves us towards something
engages us to look more carefully, more deeply. So, that's how we distinguish between the two.
And I think questioning doubt. That often involves thinking outside of meditation and thinking
about things and questioning and all kinds of things. It's a healthy thing to do. But, but being very
careful it is it does involve in certainty doesn't involve in decisiveness as a kind of This hindering
doubt, tends to be very discursive tends to be a lot of thinking and ideas. And this is where
mindfulness of thinking becomes very useful. As the basic instruction practice, I gave, in part one
included instructions for how to be mindful of thoughts and thinking, as we get skilled and
recognizing, thinking, the different kinds of thinking. We start feeling that certain ways of thinking
or distancing, certain way of thinking, disconnects me from myself disconnects me from what's
going on certain kinds of thinking with this me up my head and spinning around in an agitated
way. And I'm not settled, I'm kind of kind of agitated. And as we learn something about the quality
and the effect of thinking has on us, then we can see at some point, that certain way of thinking
the process of thinking is not so useful. It's not settled. It's not relaxed, it's tense, it's agitated. And
rather than judging the kind of thoughts or being concerned with what we're thinking, we can see
this is not a healthy way to be to be always so tense in my thoughts. Let me get reconnected. Let
me come back to breathing lets me do the three breaths journey. Let me settle down. Let me kind
of find a Reek. Let the mind thinking mind settle down. So my my thinking can rest in the mind
rest in the brain or rest in inside of me. I can still think but I'm not, you know, spinning out and
cought up in them. So if we can learn to recognize the difference difference between settled
easeful, relaxed thoughts, thinking and agitated ones, then we have a better opportunity to
notice when we're in doubt and To a better ability to question the validity of what doubt is saying
or the authority of it, that we're supposed to be caught up in all these thoughts. And instead of
being staying caught, we can try to settle the mind. And one way to say it to oneself is to the
thoughts. Let me consider you later. Let me first get settled. You might have some interesting
point. You might be some validity, but this doubt that there but thinking about it in a agitated
way, is not helpful. Let me calm down and settle down. And once I'm settled and reconnected,
then let's look at it. And chances are that when we get really settled, if the doubt is kind of
hindering doubt or involves this kind of fear based uncertainty or fear based questioning Then, if
that's that's quieted, then we'll think about it more accurately will usefully. We might feel in the
calmness of our being, that there is a natural confidence to practice. There is a feeling and the
calmness of all this is right to do this to practice this way, when we're agitated and caught up in these thoughts of doubt, or caught up in fear and caught up in expectation and striving and wanting something else, it's very uncomfortable. And, and it it, you know, it lends itself to a lack of confidence and it's hard to find confidence in those states. So to repeat what I said, to learn the basic practice of mindfulness, including learning how to be skillful and to recognize thinking and the quality of thinking we have can show us why The ways in which we're thinking is not really that useful, and not dismissing what we're thinking about. But knowing that it's useful to calm down to settle, and then maybe reconsider what the concern is. But then we consider it from a very different vantage point. And we might see the situation very differently from this new calm, settled vantage point. Sometimes doubt arises, when we have our goal and practice is two grand, we have very lofty goals or expectations. So it could be as simple as for this meditation session, I'm going to not I'm going to be with every breath and not miss one not to wander away at all. That might be too big of a of a goal. And so because with that kind of expectation that you can do that, and then the mind keeps wandering Even if it wanders off only 10 times in the 40 minute meditation session, it might be discouraging and we start having doubts about Can I do this? Is this the right practice, maybe I should do something else. And, and it had a lot to do with it was an unrealistic goal. To be the full time with every breath is sitting, maybe it's unrealistic until the mind is really well settled and concentrated. So what can be helpful is to have a much more modest goal. It might be to do the three breaths journey. Just maybe we can have confidence that you can, more or less, do the three breath journey and then do it again. And then you do it again. And and then that might build confidence. I can do the three breaths journey. I know how to do that. And if three breaths is too much, then maybe just be satisfied with one breath. If one breath is to match, just do the inhale. And then do the exhale and and build confidence on these small steps. And with small steps, it builds over time. Don't set up too big of a goal, high expectations. So you're guaranteed to have self doubt. Be content with a small goals, being present for this this moment, this moment. Walk up a very high mountain is done one step at a time. Each step, stepping, stepping, going, you know, the goal of practice Buddhist practice is pretty, you know, great, pretty lofty in a sense. But it's the way there is only one step at a time. And that's where the confidence gets built up over time. The other thing That's helpful for a doubt I said, you know, understanding and being sensitive to the different ways qualities of thinking is helpful. The same thing. It's useful as we develop practice to become a connoisseur of the quality of our physical being, of how we feel in our body, where what gets tied, what gets agitated in our body, what gets collapses in our body, where the energy in the body goes, and start recognizing what's happening in the body. Because that can be very quickly a first clue that somehow we're losing touch with ourselves. I've been sitting and meditating and feeling very connected, very grounded, kind of like the energy in some ways of attention of awareness was centered in my torso and my belly and kind of felt very stable. And then I had one single thought come up, that was so captivating and arousing, Ajit, that this I must feel like this energy inside pushes up into my head, you know, wow, you know, and with some emotion or some preoccupation or thought and to have become noticed that difference, that change of how things change what's activated. Oh,
this is a time to be mindful, I think I just kind of something radically changed. Let me be cautious here, let me bring attention to what just happened. And, and, and if I don't do that, then it's very easy to get pulled into those worlds of thinking. So to more familiar you become with your body and the changes in your body able to track it, the more you get the clues that supports you to notice when you get pulled into doubt. So what I'm what I'm pointing to here, is not directly addressing the subject of the doubt, but rather addressing how we feel mentally and physically and maybe emotionally. When doubt happens, turning the attention back on that. And then looking at this carefully, and maybe settling it, relaxing it. Now some doubts we have, maybe can't be settled that way. Some doubts, maybe about the practice about the teachings. It's best to go find someone to talk to you about it could be a friend, sometimes just talking it out and hearing ourselves talk, we understand we come to a better understanding ourselves. Or maybe the friend has some perspective to offer or go talk to a teacher. And it might sometimes doubts more very valid to have and those can be clarified and talking with the teacher. So So doubt, uncertainty, and in decisiveness. Can't come up in this practice. And when it does, it is just as valid focus of attention as anything else. It's just as valid there to step back and clearly recognize, oh, this is doubt. This is in decisiveness. This is uncertainty. And keep a kind of relaxed, open, step back recognizing there until you start feeling that you're a little bit free or a little bit separated from the doubt itself. You're not entangled with it. It's almost as if this metaphor of stepping back and stepping away and looking back at where you were, or looking back at what was there, and, and then seeing it from some objective distance, and not being entangled and caught in it. The metaphor that I like for the visual For this idea is being with a group of people who are all of them arguing, talking at once you're participating in the whole thing. And for some reason, you have a reason to step away 10 feet 15 feet, and then you turn around and look at them. You're no longer participating in the animated conversation and argument. But now you're just watching it. And you say, Wow, that's a lot of energy over there. Wow, they're really caught up. And it feels kind of nice to be away from the fray and just kind of watching it and looking at it. And maybe you care for it. You're not being aloof. But this stepping away or doubt is happening. That's this is that clear recognition. So with that, maybe we could do a our meditation today. And and I'll say before we do one more thing about doubt. If a doubt is not too strong, and we recognize it, sometimes it can be useful to use discipline to settle it to overcome it, to just say, Okay, I know there's out there, I'm just going to be committed to just being with my breath, just doing my practice. And not give it a lot of energy, not give the doubt a lot of attention or energy, but put the attention energy on just doing the practice. And if you don't have enough confidence in the practice, that's what doubt can mean. But you may be thinking, I'm going to try just being disciplined. Then what you might also do, if it makes sense for you, is to borrow the confidence of another practitioner, maybe you know, a person know their meditation practitioner or you know, a teacher, and they seem to have a lot of confidence and so try to borrow it. Try to kind of pick it up and kind of, you know, borrow it. It's okay if they have confidence, I'm going to borrow theirs and really get myself over for these minutes that I'm here and see if that can overcome this minor doubt that I'm caught in. So, I will offer you my tremendous confidence in this practice as we do this meditation. So, if you can take
a meditation posture and for this purpose today, you might take a posture that expresses confidence if you can do that without any tension, sitting with confidence and gently closing your eyes and taking the three breath journey. Counting to three, one for each of the next three breaths and then maybe doing it again this time taking some fuller breaths as three full breaths in a gentle way. Breathing in fully and exhaling fully and then letting your breathing returned to normal. And taking a little bit of time now to look around your body feel around your body for any place where you feel tense or the muscles are held tight and see as you exhale, whether you can relax that a bit If it’s not easy to relax, it’s fine. Doesn’t matter too much. But maybe relaxation means being accepting of yourself as being tense. Shoulders or attends. If they don’t relax. Relaxation isn’t the mind accepting the fact that there’s tension in the shoulders and then one more thing to do in preparation here if you could look around your body Is there any place in your body that you associate with confidence and is a place of confidence. Some people like can be their feet, their legs, some people, their hands, some people, the chest, the heart. Some people, it’s the belly area, wherever it is for you. And let yourself kind of explore and feel that part of your body where you feel some kind of confidence doesn’t have to be strong or dramatic. And even if whether the what you discover approximates confidence that’s good enough. Perhaps breathing with this place, feeling or imagining that you breathe in and out through this place of confidence then maybe with some perfume, have confidence in the background. Let yourself settle in to the experience of the body breathing. Perhaps as you exhale, letting go of your thoughts, quieting your thoughts and letting go into the exhale letting go into breathing Rather than trying to attain something in meditation to make something happen, maybe you can allow your meditation to be very simple to simply recognize what is happening. And then try to have that recognition be relaxed, calm, but also clear and allow the recognition to be recognizing what is easy and obvious to recognize as opposed to Thinking about it, analyzing it. And if it’s not clear what’s happening, it’s completely appropriate for the mental note to be something. Something is happening. To be clear, oh yeah, something is happening. I don’t know what it is, but something is happening. And that might be all you need to do, to be mindful in this central role that recognizing has means that the practice is successful each time each moment where there is some kind of clear recognition Then as you’re sitting here now Is there any degree of doubt even if it’s very teeny any uncertainty, any in decisiveness and if there is, recognize it as such. And as you recognize it, notice what influence it has You’re thinking, on your feelings or on your body If there is any subtle forms of doubt and desist and decisiveness or uncertainty. Feel that in the body, feel it in the mind notice the quality of the thinking. Notice the quality of your of the process of your Body and Mind involved in depth thoughts without giving too much attention to the content of the doubt As you exhale, release yourself into the exhale allow the release, letting go of the exhale to continue to the very end of the exhale. Not straining to do so, but relaxing to do so. And then to end this sitting in a gentle, kind way to take a few longer, slower breaths. As if you’re waking yourself up for meditation, in a shower of kindness, of caring this breathing in deeply letting go as you exhale as if you’re stepping into the world again. with kindness, with care with calmness. Having let go of doubt the best you can. Maybe opening your eyes now with the eyes of trust of confidence One of
the important or significant causes or conditions for the arising of doubt, is fear. And part of the
path of mindfulness is to learn to become well familiar with how anxiety and fear works for us.
And that takes being willing to stop and look at fear. Perhaps the bumpers bumper sticker for
mindfulness practitioners is I stopped for fear, because stop and look and get to know it. Because
that’s one way to become free of fear. Not free because it’s absence but free because we’re no
longer caught by it or limited by the fear we have. One way to do that is to study it, get to know it,
to understand it and understand ourselves in relationship to it. So fear can come up As a doubt,
there can be fear of how we’re going to be changed by meditation, fear of altered states of mind,
fear of really looking at ourselves deeply and uncertain, doubtful whether that’s really worth
doing or can I do it? So to see if we can win, there’s a lot of doubts. Sometimes you want to ask
yourself, Is there fear? And then one of the, I think one of the powerful things to do, when there’s
anxiety and fears or regular companion for oneself, it’s likely that that fear needs something from
you. Rather than dismissing it or trying to fix it, or trying to solve it, or trying to analyze it, to try to
talk to us to talk yourself out of it. Sometimes, you know, this powerful thing we do in mindfulness
of turning around and looking at something and really recognizing it. There it is. This is Fear. But
more might be important once we do that can really see it there. Maybe the fear needs
something from us. And one of the things that fear often needs our fear, our especially anxiety,
and chronic fear that, you know, ghosts have gone on for years. It needs to feel safe. And our task
is to help our fear, feel safe. And that means that if you’re trying to fix it to get away from it, you’re
embarrassed by it, you’re angry at it, you’re trying to, you know, you know, overcome it. It’s not
going to feel safe, it’s going to feel like it’s not wanted, it’s gonna feel like it’s wrong or something.
But to imagine that the soft harms of mindfulness you come from underneath the fear you find
where it is in the body, feel the sensations of it, really recognize it as a physical aspect of fear, and
come with awareness and just hold it in the soft palms of awareness. And try to make it feel safe.
And you know, one of the great mantra to do this is say to it, it’s okay. You don’t have to explain
what is okay? That’s a very powerful mantra. It’s okay. And one of the things you’re trying to
convey to the fear, it’s okay to be afraid. I’m here with you, I’ll protect you. It’s okay for you to be
afraid right now. And when fear starts to feel safe, then it begins to thaw, then it begins to open
up, then it begins to relax. And some of our problems we have in life and problems, some things
were afraid of, are not things that need to be solved, but rather, is to represent something that
needs to dissolve. And if we’re always solving, we don’t allow this deeper interpersonal process of
disease. All thing happening, that can happen if we get out of the way, while at the same time
holding it in awareness. So experiment with that those of you who have chronic fear, anxiety and
to regular companion, it’s very common for humans to have that it’s completely worthwhile and
useful. objects from mindfulness fear and you can develop a lot of mindfulness, strengthen it with
fears to subject but see if you can hold it and help it really feel safe. Like maybe you’ve
never done this before, allow the fear to have its time in the sun and the sun of awareness. So I say
this because sometimes doubt, come as prompt by fear and the real issue is not the doubt is the
underlying fear until Look at that. So we have about 10 minutes before the And I can take some
questions if you’d like to offer ask some and try to respond to something that’s particularly useful
for some of you. And involve are waiting for the questions I could say that tomorrow is the last
day for these hindrance series. And, and there has been some requests for introduction to
mindfulness meditation, part three, and one person sent a very nice message, suggesting that
that could be in the, what in the Buddhist teachings called the seven factors of awakening, which
is the Buddhist teaching. It’s kind of these two teachings, the hindrances and the seven factors of
awakening are kind of paired up like two sides of a seesaw. And as the hindrances go down, these
seven factors, good factors of mind get stronger, when the hindrances get stronger, the seven
factors of awakening disappear. And, and so the Buddha clearly paired them up that way. So it
might make a next one. So I’ll think about it about doing it, then I might need to wait a while now
maybe I maybe have to wait until June. In post, see, you can look at MCs website to see if we you
know, keep an eye on the schedule there. So so that answers one of the questions that was here.
Thank you, Gail, any doubts? any insights on how to handle overwhelming thoughts of doubt
about the future? Well, chances are there’s a lot of fear than if they’re overwhelming. And maybe
what it needs to address is the fear about it. And and if it’s really overwhelming, what you might
do is write your fears down, write your doubts down, and, and maybe do a kind of stream of
consciousness writing about what you’re afraid of and Then after you’ve done it for that for
maybe 1520 minutes, you might go back and reread it a few times, or maybe even copy those
doubts down on a second piece of paper. And just getting them out on paper and being really
clear about them might give your mind a different relationship to them. You might understand
them in a different way. Something I’ve done in the past, when I had not doubt so much, but I was
really troubled by something and a lot of grief and sadness. When I was driving, and I was alone, I
would talk to myself out loud about it. And I found that I hit when I talk out loud. I access a
different part of my mind. But I talk something I quietly think to myself. And it turned out that
there’s there’s more clarity, more wisdom, more objectivity, more access to a wider intelligence.
Sometimes and talking out loud than just getting caught up in the mental chatter that goes on. So
writing, journaling, talking out loud, might give you more clarity and a little bit caught not caught
so much in it. And it might give you an opportunity to think more wisely about what you’re doing.
So if you’re overwhelmed by the future, and you’re constantly reading the news, stop reading the
news. Most news is actually old. Things haven’t really changed so much. In the thousands of
years. It’s just old, in a different form a different shape. And, and so it might be helpful just not to
read so much. For example. Okay, I appreciate anything you have to say about trust. So trust, I
love the word trust. I like it more than I think For example, and, and trust, though, you know, what
can I What can I say about it? Certainly trust is confidence. But trust is a openness and allowing
that there’s something good here that something is right here something is supportive here. And
that and you don’t just trust blindly or trust anything, but to trust the mindfulness, to trust
meditation, to sit in meditation, and learn that being clearly recognizing what’s happening, being
present, for what’s happening in the present, and kind of opening to it to keep opening to it.
That’s a very trustable process, meaning it’s okay to open to it’s okay to allow it to move through
us. Good things come when we open up and move that allow it to move through it, even if what
happens is more intense and more difficult at first. I’ve learned you can trust that process, keep
opening. So this so trust for me has this connotation of, it’s okay to hang in there with this. Something is supporting us something is moving through right now. That’s not always the case and all human situations. But if you practice mindfulness, most situations work out for the best. That’s what I found. But that means really practicing mindfulness and not kind of getting tripped up by reactivity. So I have a doubt when I use raft and Bella during meditation. Well, maybe if you need some clarification about how this practice of raft of practice Abella work and you need to ask some questions or in order to sit down and and come up with different explanations for these are different standings are different acronyms even for yourself, they work for you. You don’t have to stick to actually what I’m teaching. And the other thing is maybe you say, I have doubt when I use these practices during meditation, maybe what really needs attention is to turn away from the those practices and focus on the doubt itself. Just be mindful of doubt, until the doubt has abated and quiet and then you can use these other practices in some way. And, and also, you know, these practices I give that I give with the acronym raft, which I did in part one of the meditation class. And then Bella for this one. They don’t always the best thing to use. So even though I’ve taught them I think they’re useful and useful for me and for many people, even you know, not it’s always the right call and what’s needed for me and And sometimes I shouldn’t be trying so hard. Sometimes I shouldn’t try to always be doing practice and techniques to try to figure out how to make it work and get ahead, find my way. Sometimes, you know, you want to mindfulness is not so much about, about getting something or acquiring something or becoming something. The heart of mindfulness is this recognition just clearly recognize. And this Bella and raft are supports for what to recognize, but not meant to get over something. So maybe your doubt has something to do with using them as a technique or, or avoiding what’s really happening or maybe you’re using them too much. And sometimes you just want to sit peacefully with what is even if it’s difficult. I can’t find the archived versions of this series of talks. It’s should be on YouTube, we have a YouTube channel for IMC. I think it’s called insight med. But you can get to it through IMC website. On the YouTube channel, there’s a thing called playlists. And under playlists, I think it should be there as its own playlist, the introduction to meditation playlist on audio Dharma because we do, we are doing the audio recording. It should be there but it’s not in any kind of list it just kind of you have to look by the date my name and by the date or mine, you know, for if you just do the Yeah, so if you do hindrances, a search, you can probably find it. And I might have missed one of the might be one talk that’s missing from audio dharma. That hasn’t made it up yet. Thank you for differentiating the two kinds of doubt. I was not able to articulate them before and now I feel more legitimate and having questioning doubts. them out great. And the guided meditations that relate to the topic each day had been helpful. How do we transition that to meditating on our own without guidance? Great question. You could listen to some of these for a while until they become a little more second nature and more familiar with it. So you know how to do it for yourself. Or your alternate days, or one day alone one day with guided meditation, so that you’re experimenting and exercising your ability to find your own way. And in the long term, you want to find your own way, you know, long term you want to become your own teacher. So yes, transitioning is actually part of the process. But how you do that. It’s probably
individual for each person. And if you ask yourself that question, maybe the answer will come
easier if you think of this path. Mindfulness as being a path of trial and error, there'll be plenty of
air, you know, because that that didn't quite work. But try trial and error, see what works for you.
Because one of the principles of mindfulness meditation and Buddhism is, is to ask the question, is
it helpful? what I'm doing? And is it helpful for Buddhist terminology? Is it helpful? And in the
process of becoming free? How does procrastination lie in the hindrances? Yeah, I don't think I've
ever thought about this, but thinking about it now. Maybe there’s, it might be interesting to look at
when there's procrastination to see if any one of the hindrances underlie it. I could well imagine
that aversion. You know, resistance might be their kind of title. Want to do that? There could be
desire to enjoy the comfort of my office, you know, whatever I'm doing that I don't want to leave
that I'm going to hold on to it that's why I don't do something which is more uncomfortable
perhaps. It could be sloth and torpor, it could be there's too much restlessness to get started.
Worry. And there could be that there's a lot of doubt. And, and so you might look and see you
know underlying it procrastination what's your recommendation was staying open with fear and
not closing down during meditation. Thank you. You know, but the question of trust before when
there's a lot of fear and some fear is really strong. Some people have terror inside of them and
and things happen in life that there's good reason why people have very strong fear that lives in
them and can be reawakened pretty easily. So it takes a lot of care and wisdom, if that's the case,
and, and, and so then there are times when it's important to practice at the speed of trust. You
don't have to go any faster than the degree to which you have trust and confidence that you can
be with what's going on. And don't go deep into fear or strong fear, unless you have the trust to
do that. And of course, fear represents a lack of trust, but you don't only go into it with at the
speed of trust, and V minute takes days, weeks, years. Take your time with it. And and don't think
they have to stay open to fear continuously. Sometimes it's enough and very powerful, very useful.
To open to it briefly. Maybe that's okay to do. And then step away and reground oneself recenter
oneself, even attempt to distract yourself for a few minutes, open your eyes and look around,
come back into your body and get centered again. And then at some point when you feel like you
have enough trust, enough confidence enough, you know stability, then go and open to it again.
But don't go very you know, if it's a it's a big issue in your life, don't go for very long just tap into it.
And I've sometimes given people the instructions to imagine awareness is like soft cotton balls,
and just come and tap the fear very gently, and then pull away. And then over time, things might
open and, and, and feel safer to go deeper and deeper into it. When the trust is there. Then we
can open more and more and more. And it made me feel like I can do this. I can do this.
Sometimes when really difficult fear. It's the fear of fear, which is the big issue. And so we wait
until we trust that it's okay to be with a fear. And then in terms of, you know, paying attention to
the obvious or paying attention to what's the primary thing, sometimes what's useful is to not to
bring attention to what we're afraid of, or to the primary central fear, but rather to bring
mindfulness to the fear of the fear. And once that fear or the fear has quieted down, then it might
be easier to be present for the decentral fear. Is it possible that your experience that you
experience at the same time desire and aversion towards the same object situation? I think it
might be and this leaves one very confused? Yeah, I think so. And I think confusion Yeah, that's part of human life and easy to get confused and and easy. have many multiple conflicting kind of things going on at the same time. One could have a strong desire for a committed relationship and a lot of aversion to it and fear and, and that's that confusion around, wanting and being in and pulling away. pulling forward and putting putting away can be only confusing for you. But I'm not saying this is for your issue, but it can also be confusing the people you're with. And confusion is not a sin is not a crime. What we're trying to do in mindfulness is to live an honest life. And if what we really feel is confusion, really stay with that or this is confusion. If you're in a relationship or doing something in the world where an honest relationship is what's needed, then be honest about the confusion. It might be very different. interpersonal process. It talks about the confusion around desire and aversion, then to talk about either one by themselves. I think people have more sympathetic if they realize you're confused. So I'm not sure if that addresses the question, but I maybe apologize if I didn't. That's what occurred to me kind of extemporaneously. I think the the chat thing is jumping around a little bit so I apologize that maybe I'm not reading them in order. Oh, how to deal with delusion in general and in doubt, in doubt related thought. I think delusion can be treated very similar to practice with very similar to how I've been talking about that today. But I think one of the one of the ways to recognize the illusion, IP to recognize the illusion, it really helps to have a quiet mind. And so to know when your mind is not quiet, and know how to get some semblance of a quieter mind, more settled mind, more mindful mind. Because if you're mindful strong enough, our mind is quiet enough, you can see the beginning point of a rising thought. And if you could see a thought when it first arises, then you're more likely to notice it. It's just a thought. And you can put a question mark next to it is this accurate? So for example, there can be some delusion about some other person you have a judgment about a person and or a bias about a person. But if you can notice when that bias that judgment comes just up for the first time, then there might be enough space to put a question mark. And is this really so and you look more carefully to see if it's the case, to see if you're operating on some kind of bias or preconceived idea or something prejudice or something. So we're working with delusion, to to just talk to someone who's spinning around in their thoughts and agitated and all that that, you know, notice your delusion. It's very hard to do. But if you practice if you really want to get underneath and really want to not live a deluded life, become calm. If you become calm, then you can be wise about it and see how it operates. Perhaps tomorrow you could address best way to deal with our Suffering sense of loss due to impermanence of people things we love people, people and things we love, we lose them, they people die, things disappear. Yeah. Sometimes the mindfulness practice learning to be present, honestly what's there, but without resistance without clinging, without being for or against learning to trust, just being open to it might be that we sense of loss that grief, can, what's needed is what's best to just let our hearts break. Sometimes this life of ours is heartbreaking. And I've certainly learned through this practice, to allow my heart to break many times, those are breaks many times a day. And, and, and I've learned to kind of be at peace with that and still allow it and doing so it's kind of just it's kind of clean or it's kind of clear. It's kind of I don't get And it's so much they don't see it as wrong or mistake. I did give a talk two days ago
and Monday, Monday evening here I MC on grief therapist in particular, addressing what's going on with COVID-19 and tremendous amount of grief and loss it's going on and and I think many people are feeling some level of grief these days and it's a you know, so that if you might want to listen to that talk and maybe that would be nice for you. helpful. So this is great. I very much appreciate the questions the thank yous the Google statements about this has been useful for you to do this and I feel you know, two months ago, I never would have thought that I could be talking to a camera and and with the computer on and and felt such warmth and from all Have you and also my warmth for you and my care and my sense of connectedness and my delight at what we're doing here and how we are together. So I thank you all very much for this time and this opportunity and look forward to being with you again tomorrow. Thank you.