

Seven Factors of Awakening –A Year Living These Treasures- Home practices #5
(Next class 6/14/24 at 6:00-8:30pm). HAVE FUN with these practices! Happy Spring!

- 1) **Sit every day.** Try sitting for a minimum of 15-30 minutes per day. (More if you are able)
Practice your meditation in silence.

Start your sitting practice remembering your intention to be Mindful, the 1st factor of awakening. **Asking:** "What is being know right now? Is Mindfulness present right now or not? (laugh if not). The 2nd factor is investigation **Asking:** Is there interest & curiosity about your experience? Begin to understand what are wholesome/skillful states of mind & what are not. "What is this?" or "What is happening in this moment?"

This month, open to Energy-(Pali is Viriya) the Third factor of Awakening.

Viriya is translated as energy, effort, strength, courage, vigor, perseverance & persistence. Energy is a sense of wakefulness, alertness, clarity. In the willingness to turn towards the present moment over & over again-- the result is more energy. Energy Increases engagement with practice, especially cultivating wholesome, skillful, beneficial states & actions and letting go of unwholesome, unskillful states & actions. We are learning how to cultivate the skillful and learning how to abandon the habits that we get caught in that create suffering.

Remembering, it's the energy-effort to turn toward our experience & allow, accept whatever our experience is. It is not the energy -effort to try & change anything, not the effort to attain anything in particular, not trying to become anyone. **It's the energy-**To turn towards our experience, to sustain the energy, to see something different, something new-

Asking: Is there energy right now or not? "Is this suffering or not suffering? Is this wholesome or not wholesome?" Check and see, are you applying effort by striving or by relaxing? How do you know if you are applying the right amount of effort? ** Too much, agitated? Restlessness? Not enough, sinking into sloth or torpor? Is it possible to come back into balance? Being present, neither too tight or too loose attention- OR...

****Reflect:** Do you find that you are applying effort by striving or by softening, relaxing? How do you know if you are applying the right amount of effort? ****Experiment** with applying more effort in meditation. By mentally being alert & mindful of what is happening during the meditation or By sitting up straighter or by brisk walking meditation before sitting – If lying down raise your arm bending at the elbow, or your hand, or a finger. If applying more effort is agitating, try to match the increased effort with increased calm.

- 2) **In daily life:** The energy & effort of learning how to cultivate that which is skillful, wholesome — which means awareness, kindness, or caring for the world around you, or living more in the present and the energy, effort to abandon the habits, the fears of things that we get caught in that create suffering that keeps stuck, and the energy-effort to sustain them. This is a teaching that applies to our sitting & daily life;. Our life is made up of little activities, little habits, And we can begin to work with the way we drive our car, ride our bike, walk. The way that we relate to people at work, or the way we eat, what we choose to eat,— to make activities more conscious. To make our approach to daily life with greater mindfulness, awareness, attention, with more caring, kindness. **Reflect:** What are a few things in your own life that could benefit by bringing a little more of this energy, this effort- more attention? or the energy-effort to let go and abandon? What could you use in some way to wake up more, to awaken?

Please do your best with **at least one of the following Reflections & Practices (a-c).**

a) Reflections: How easy is it for you to stay with a task until it is completed? How do you relate to obstacles or difficulties that arise? Do you have the persistence to be with them? Do you work on tasks past a point of diminishing returns?

Practices: This week decide to complete a task that you have been intending to do, but haven't. Notice your energy level when you think about doing this task, when you're about to begin the task, while you're doing the task & after you've completed the task. When did you feel the most energetic? Which part required the most energy? Did any give you energy? How might this affect your practice?

b) Reflections: Which requires more energy for you- releasing or acquiring? Which gives you more energy - releasing or acquiring? How does this affect your meditation practice? How does this affect the quality of your life?

Practices: This week decide to let go of an object or a habit that you believe hinders your meditation practice. It doesn't have to be a big item or habit, but a meaningful one. Notice your energy level as you contemplate letting go of this item, as you let go and after letting go. What took the most energy? Which step gave you the most energy?

c) Reflections: In the list of the Seven Factors or Awakening, energy is listed after investigation & before joy. Why do you think this is? Do you experience a relationship between investigation and energy? Do you experience a relationship between energy and joy?

Practices: Explore or study something that is interesting to you. It could be as simply as looking something up in Google or Wikipedia, or talking to an "expert" about something you've been curious about. While investigating, notice your energy level & your sense of well-being. Have they increased or decreased since you've started investigating? During the week, pay attention if a sense of well-being arises. How is your energy level when you have a sense of well-being?

3) **Continue this month of practice-**

*When the awakening factors are present there is no room for the hindrances. The hindrances are absent. One simple way of understanding our practice is to nurture or let go-to release or let go, of the hindrances and to strengthen or cultivate the awakening factors. It is possible to be mindful of the hindrances as an object of meditation **Both in formal practice & daily life practice!** **This Month explore energy & Restlessness & sloth or torpor.***

Recollect that the awakening factors point to freedom-free from greed, hatred, delusion- We can experience that in clear moments when the hindrances are absent. Might be nano-seconds and those moments can begin to grow **Ahh..Awakening is a verb, a process!**

Hindrance Hint: If a hindrance arises- get to know it And If what is arising is too difficult in this moment-open to your anchor or the 3 E's- eyebrows, earlobe, elbow. Sometimes it is skillful when something is very strong to put it aside, especially if you're willing to open to it when there is more steadiness of heart & mind. Requires patience.

4) **Walking Meditation:** Be Mindful when you are walking. Gently aware of the feet making contact with the ground.

5) **Gratitude Practices:** 3 things you are grateful for daily. Email or Text your buddies.

6) **Pause Meditation:** (Several times in your day)

7) **Thanissaro Bhikkhu's book, Factors For Awakening,**

<https://www.dhammatalks.org/books/#FactorsforAwakening> Please read pages 18-22

8) **Please read daily, The Seven Factors of Awakening:** Notice in sitting practice & daily life when any of the above states of heart or mind are present in your body, heart, and mind.

1. Mindfulness (sati)

Being aware of what is happening in the present moment

2. Investigation (dhamma-vicaya)

Investigation supported by wisdom.

Understands what are skillful/healthy/beneficial states of mind and what are not.

3. Energy (viriya)-Diligence, effort.

Increased engagement with practice, especially freeing oneself from unskillful states.

4. Joy (piti)

Feeling of delight, rapture.

Touching that which is refreshing and beautiful, both within and without.

Arises when attention is absorbed

5. Tranquility (passaddhi)

Calming and stilling of body/ mind,

Ease, quietness of mind, relaxation

6. Concentration (samadhi)

The mind is focused, settled, steady and composed

The mind becomes unified around what we're concentrating on, one-pointedness of mind.

7. Equanimity (upekkha)

Balance, spaciousness, and non-reactivity of mind,

balance in the face of change, being aware of all phenomena w/o grasping or aversion

Sublime and extremely satisfying state of heart/mind

8) Please get to know, The Five Hindrances: Can you surround each with acceptance?

- **Sense-desire:** wanting, lust or greed, craving-fantasy.
- **Aversion:** ill will, hatred, anger, fear, boredom, annoyance, irritation, impatience, judging- guilt.
- **Sloth & torpor:** sleepiness, sluggishness, dullness, fogginess, lack of vitality.
- **Restlessness and worry:** anxiousness, agitation, nervousness, jumpiness.
- **Doubt:** Uncertainty, self doubt, skeptical doubt, uncertainty/indecision

A Gentle Hindrance Hint: How did-do we relate when these Hindrances arise in

meditation & in our daily life? The best way to relate with skillfulness is to recognize, know what is happening in the present, to be mindful. Simply acknowledge the hindrance is that has arisen in this moment in your life, in your practice. If possible, touch them with your heart. To connect with tenderness or caring, to befriend the hindrance, do your best not to judge them.

