

Seven Factors of Awakening –A Year Living These Treasures- Home practices #9

*****(Next class 11/8/24 at 6:00-8:30pm).**

HAVE FUN with these practices! *Happy Autumn!*

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

- Mindfulness is, the 1st factor of awakening. **Asking:** "What is being know right now? Is Mindfulness present right now or not? (laugh if not).
- The 2nd is investigation. **Asking:** Is there interest & curiosity about your experience? Begin to understand what wholesome/skillful states of mind are & what are not. "What is this?" or "What is happening in this moment?"
- The 3rd is energy. **Asking:** Is there energy right now or not? "Is this suffering or not suffering? Is this wholesome or not wholesome?" Check & see, are you applying effort by striving or by softening?
- The 4th is joy. **Asking:** Is there joy or rapt interest, right now or not? Is there a spark of joy-delight or not?
- The 5th is Tranquility. **Asking:** How is the mind right now? Is there some sense of Tranquility, Calm, Stillness, Ease, Quietness arising right now or not? If there is some sense of agitation how might that release? As the agitation settles down, the mind/heart becomes quieter and quieter. If Tranquility feels like a stretch connecting to what registers as calm may help us connect to the experience.
- The 6th is Concentration. **Asking:** So right now is the mind calm, stable, steady, undistracted or not? If it's a bit scattered, can you (soften) so you can release whatever it is that is preoccupying you? As you practice softening, opening, loosening or softening, releasing, letting go, coming home to the object then you can experience deeper levels of steadiness. Samadhi is satisfying.
- **The 7th Factor of Awakening is Equanimity.** **Asking:** *How is the Equanimity right now?* Equanimity is the profound balance, spaciousness & non-reactivity in the heart and mind. It is accepting what is. The mind is steady, stable, allowing, not wanting anything, there is no not wanting anything, deep acceptance, deep allowing. Equally near all things. Strength, courage & balance in the face of change, being aware of all phenomena without grasping or aversion.

Simply noticing when asking is there equanimity right now?

2) **This month, Equanimity, Upekkha- in Pali, -- the Seventh Factor of Awakening**

Equanimity - is the last calming factor. It is an open, spacious, even mindedness to whatever our experiences are- An unshakable balance of heart a deep spaciousness. Equally near all things (not detached)
Equanimity is a result of calm and concentration coming together. It arises when instead of reacting or flaying about, seeing if we can be more aware and less reactive to our experiences.

The opposite of Equanimity is our friend and hindrance restlessness and worry: anxiousness, agitation, nervousness, jumpiness. Also, keep in mind - What looks like Equanimity and isn't are indifference or dullness or a sense of rejecting life or someone else- and having it look like calm, balance, spaciousness. Equanimity is fully engaging in life with out reactivity. Equanimity has a deep understanding that things are as they are. This creates strength and courage of the heart and mind that allows us to be present without withdrawing into resentment, blame, self- pity. Equanimity's strength comes from understanding change. Knowing that change is inevitable- Knowing we can't control the uncontrollable world. We learn to trust, understand that all things are impermanent, Imperfect, Impersonal knowing this we live in freedom.

3) **Below are reflections & practices for Equanimity in daily life & formal meditation- Please choose & experiment with at least 2 of the following:**

a) **Reflections:** Recollect a time when you felt present, poised, balanced, spacious while in the midst of an exciting or difficult activity? Recollect a time when you felt very present for what was happening & yet able to also see the bigger picture of what was occurring? How did it feel to not be caught up & lost in the activity, yet to still experience it? How did it feel in your body?

- o **Practices:** During your daily formal meditation practice, see if you can notice any feelings of poise, balance, spaciousness, evenness. If you don't experience a sense of any of these, then explore what prevents you from being present & feeling equanimity with what has arisen.

b) **Reflection:** Some are put off by their ideas of equanimity, fearing that it asks us to have a cool aloofness, indifference to our experience & the

world around us. What are your ideas about equanimity? How do you distinguish it from indifference or dry neutrality?

- **Practices:** When you find yourself in a challenging situation apply yourself to be mindful of your body. Give attention to your posture & assume a posture that is grounded & balanced. Explore how a dedication to being mindful of body & posture helps you to be more equanimous.

c) Reflections: In the list of the 7 Factors or Awakening equanimity is last, after concentration. Why do you think this is? Do you experience a relationship between concentration & equanimity? How might these factors contribute to your development?

- **Practice:** In formal and daily life meditation practice notice when you feel calm and settled, then notice how balanced, spacious, poised you feel when you're calm. Also notice the relationship between feeling agitated and your ability to hold experiences with equanimity.

d) Reflection & Practices: Equanimity is a quality of mind and heart that when developed, allows one to meet every kind of experience with both strength & softness or fluidity that doesn't get caught by circumstances. To discover its power within is one of the greatest joys in practice. **What did you notice this month?**

****Pause Practice: Each day or many times a day**

Stop tune into your heart. That is where love, wisdom, grace & compassion reside. With a loving attention feel what matters most to you. Yes there may be anxious, thoughts, worried or fearful thoughts, grief or trauma. **Don't let your heart be colonized by fear! Take time to quiet the mind and tend to the heart.** Go out-side or look out a window at the sky. Breathe in, Open yourself to the vastness. Sense the seasons changing. Breathe Out & Rest in loving awareness. Practice steadiness & equanimity. Look at the trees, Learn from them. They remain still in the midst of it all. They are nature, you are nature. **You too, can be the still-point in the center of it all!**

4) 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 how Steadiness or concentration can be a stabilizing factor***

with Restlessness and worry or how it can become a hindrance of desire.

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!

- 5) **Walking Meditation:** Be Mindful when you are walking. **Notice rushing-** when we are ahead of ourselves just walk, when standing just stand.)
- 6) **Gratitude Practices:** 3 things you are grateful for daily. Email or Text your buddies.
- 7) **Pause Meditation: (Several times in your day)**
- 8) **Thanissaro Bhikkhu's book, Factors For Awakening,**
<https://www.dhammatalks.org/books/#FactorsforAwakening> **Please read pages 39-38**
- 9) **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

10) 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 is 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.