

Seven Factors of Awakening –A Year Living These Treasures- Home practices #6
(Next class 7/12/24 at 6:00-8:30pm). HAVE FUN with these practices! Happy Summer!

- 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 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? 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?

This month, open to Joy-(Pali is Piti) the Fourth Factor of Awakening.

Piti is translated as joy or rapture and is the last of the uplifting or arousing factors. It's an aliveness, joyful or rapt interest. It's a state of happiness, delight, gladness of the heart in seeing truth clearly. The joy that comes out of being open to life as it is. In practice, we discover joy. There is a willingness to let go of concepts, agendas, ideas, conclusions of how we think things are for the knowing how things are and being in the present moment. To know things as they are, in the present, we can know joy, delight, contentment, and ease.

Remembering, to recognize joy, rapture for what it is: usually pleasurable in the body, delight in the mind, heightened interest- please see what is our relationship to it. Any clinging? This is mine or it has arisen in me? This is who I am? I am like this. I want this to continue? Now I know.? Or even if a sense of disappointment or longing arises when joy or rapture fades. Or an attempt to create the conditions again- walk a certain way, sit a certain way. Yikes- clinging and attachment- or our hindrance friend-Desire- Understanding all these states are impermanent, impersonal imperfect- insight- understanding what is the path and what is not.

Asking: Is there joy or rapt interest, right now or not? Is there a spark of joy-delight or not?

However, If joy feels like a stretch knowing that all these factors have a range of intensity- maybe simply noticing a sense of appreciation, or gratitude, or just connecting to what registers as pleasant can help us connect to the experience of rapt interest or joy.

- 2) **Below are In reflections & practices for joy in daily life & formal meditation-**
Please choose & experiment with at least 2 of the following 5 Reflections & Practices

a) Reflections: What helps you feel ease, contentment or joy? What are the activities that most easily bring you joy? Is it some kind of physical activity? Are you more likely to feel joy when you are with others or when you are alone? Do you experience joy that is not dependent on any particular activity? If so, what conditions bring about that joy? How easy is it for you to be in touch with the sources for your joy? (from class)

Practices: At the end of each day reflect on when you felt the greatest sense of well-being, joy or contentment. Is there a rhythm of your sense of well-being on most days ; e.g. do you feel the most ease in the morning or evening ? Or does your sense of well-being depend mostly on the activities you're doing? If possible, try meditating at different times in the day. Is there a time of day when you feel more of a sense of well being and ease in your meditation?

b) Reflections: How do you know when you have a sense of well-being, contentment or joy? Is it more of a physical sensation or a mental sensation for you? How is feeling joyful different

than feeling ill-at ease or uncomfortable? What affect does joy have on you? What happens to your thinking & level of pre-occupation when you are joyful? (from class)

Practices: Spend more time than you normally would with activities that support a feeling of well-being or joy. Notice how your body feels when you feel content. Notice your mind & emotional state when you have this feeling. Is the feeling of joy consistent or does it fluctuate?

c) Reflections: *Please come up with a list of easy ways that you can increase the frequency and amount of joy during your daily life.* What are some of the easy ways you can help yourself to have more delight? What are some of the obvious occurrences in your daily life that you often overlook which would bring some degree of joy if you really noticed?

Practices: Spend more time than you normally would doing a hobby or activity that requires you to be focused & engaged. Notice the sense of well-being you have before, during & after being absorbed or engaged in an activity. When did you feel the most ease? Notice whether you have any beliefs, judgments about or resistance to the activity & notice how that mind - set affects your feeling of contentment or well-being.

d) Reflections: During meditation do you find that contentment or joy arises? How can you tell whether you are creating conditions for joyfulness or repressing joy due to an underlying belief that joy should not be experienced during spiritual practice?

Practices: Just before meditating, reflect on those things that inspire your practice. In the course of your meditation, notice any feelings of joy, well-being or pleasure that occurs. Be sensitive to the physical sensations that come with the joy. Allow yourself to enjoy those feelings. Gently, patiently, let those feelings grow as you continue your meditation. If possible, have the sensations of joy be a source of biofeedback for your steadiness, encouraging you to continue to practice. After the meditation, briefly reflect if there is a relationship between your daily behavior & the experience of joy during your meditation.

e) Reflection: How is your sense of well-being, when you are present in the moment?

Practices: Experiment with applying more mindfulness to your life. This can be done either by increasing the time in formal meditation practice or by applying more mindfulness during particular daily life activities; e.g. while brushing your teeth or doing the dishes. Notice whether your sense of contentment or well - being increases or decreases when you're mindful.

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 Joy & how it can be an arousing factor with slough & torpor 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!

4) **Walking Meditation:** Be Mindful when you are walking. Gently aware of the feet making contact with the ground. Take a moment to notice your surroundings. If outside, notice the sky.

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.dhammadata.org/books/#FactorsforAwakening> **Please read pages 23-26**
- 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 (viriyā)-Diligence, effort.**
 Increased engagement with practice, especially freeing oneself from unskillful states.
 4. **Joy (pīti)**
 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 (samādhi)**
 The mind is focused, settled, steady and composed
 The mind becomes unified around what we're concentrating on,
 one-pointedness of mind.
 7. **Equanimity (upekkhā)**
 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
- 9) **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, foginess, 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.