

**Seven Factors of Awakening – A Year Living These Treasures – Home practices #10**  
**\*\*\*(Next class is a workshop 12/7/24 at 10:00am– 4:00pm). HAVE FUN with these practices!**

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 1<sup>st</sup> factor of Asking:** “What is being know right now? Is Mindfulness present right now or not? (laugh if not).
  - **The 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 4<sup>th</sup> is joy. Asking:** Is there joy or rapt interest, right now or not? Is there a spark of joy-delight or not?
  - **The 5<sup>th</sup> 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 6<sup>th</sup> 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 7<sup>th</sup> 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: EXPLORE ALL 7 FACTORS – Reflections:**
  - By recognizing the 7 factors as mental states operating in daily life we can then understand that meditation relies on ordinary capacities we already have rather than the introduction of new abilities foreign to our experience. In this way we may be able to access these seven mental states as they already live inside of us. Once accessed, we can develop them further.

- Just as the 7 factors are useful in daily life, they are helpful in meditation practice. In daily life they support a wholehearted involvement with what we are doing. In meditation they support a wholehearted engagement with the practice. The more they are present, the easier it is to be fully engaged with the practice. They help make meditation more satisfying and beneficial.
- The 7 factors also work together to find balance between the energizing and the calming aspects of meditation. Investigation, effort, and joy are energizing and can be called on when energy is too low; tranquility, concentration, and equanimity are calming and can be called on when energy is too high. Mindfulness itself is called the 'great balancer' because the clear recognition of imbalance by mindfulness helps bring the other factors into balance.

**Practices:**

- Recognizing the factors when they are present in us helps to develop them. It also gives us the opportunity to cultivate them further. Since the factors are sources of inner well-being, they reinforce the momentum to deepen and to develop one's practice.
- These factors create the conditions in the mind so the mind can do the kind of letting go that leads to Liberation. Prior to Liberation, the seven factors can be developed to the point of becoming inner strengths that facilitate the process of gradually releasing clinging. Experiences of non-clinging help us make different choices about how we live our lives. This, in turn, can support the process of developing the seven factors and further reducing clinging.
- Share with your buddies the ways you recognize the 7 factors. Ways you learned how to stay with them, deepen, strengthen and nourish them.

3. **Continuing Equanimity with this month-, Upekkha- the Seventh Factor of Awakening**

- **Equanimity** experienced as cool, restful, easeful, even-mindedness, spacious, unshakable balance of mind, The 8 worldly winds are gain & loss, praise & blame, fame & shame, and pleasure & pain. When equanimity is developed, we can ride the waves with ease-balance. Without equanimity we are tossed about by the winds, crashing into life's circumstances. Practicing equanimity with no preferences supports all of the awakening factors and strengthens the three characteristics. (Impermanence, Imperfect, impersonal) We can develop equanimity through non-attachment, association with wise people, and practicing wise attention with continuous mindfulness.
- **Election Equanimity:** Sky gazing outside or looking out a window-gaze at the sky. Taking in the volume of space. This can help open and rest the mind. Inside, in a room, instead of focusing on objects, notice the space defined by the enclosure. Try it in conversations. Notice the person with whom you are talking with and noticing the space in the room while participating in the conversation. These exercises cut the visual fixation on a single object and opening up the visual field can cut mental fixations as well.

4. **Below are reflections & practices for Equanimity in daily life & formal meditation- Just in case you need them this month- from last month!**
  - **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.
  - **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.
  - **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.
  - **Reflection & Practice:** 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.
5. **\*\*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!**
6. **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! Explore how Equanimity 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!**
7. **Walking Meditation:** Be Mindful when you are walking.
8. **Gratitude Practices:** 3 things you are grateful for daily. Email or Text your buddies.
9. **Thanissaro Bhikkhu's book, Factors For Awakening, Please read pages 44-58**

10. 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

11. 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. Connect with tenderness or caring, befriending - do your best not to judge.