

Live without Fear and Anxiety Class - Week 1 Transcript

Caren Prentice: Out alright, you guys, let's start with the meditation. Let's start with the meditation, Natalie. Good to see you all right. You made it. And Liz nice to meet you.

All right. Okay, all right, loves. Let's I'm Caren. Let's just start with a brief brief meditation to just come here. So go ahead and get comfortable in your in your chair, or your couch, or your bed wherever you're sitting.

and let's go ahead and just make sure your feet. If you're in a chair, that your feet are flat on the floor. Ankles are not crossed. and just feel the connection of your feet with whatever they are resting on. and see if you can discover a sensation, just a sensation.

and the soles of your feet. And if you're sitting in a bed with your legs outstretched in front of you. Then let that sensation be in the calves or the heels. Okay. and if you're sitting cross-legged and let it be on the sides of the feet.

and for just a few moments just ask yourself, how would I describe this sensation in my feet or my calves to someone? Alright! Good job. Now just gently move your attention up. To where your buttocks are in contact with whatever you're sitting on.

Justin Phillips: Got it.

Caren Prentice: And how would you describe that sensation to someone? See if you can come up with 3 words or 3 phrases. It's okay to use metaphors.

And then I'm going to ask if you had to explain to us the dominant sensation you're experiencing from the effect of your body, sitting and pressing into your chair that sensation in your buttocks or sensation related to that to what we call your seat. How would you describe that dominant sensation to someone?

And then let's just gently bring our attention up to the breath in the nostrils, and notice as you inhale. The breath is cool. and notice as you exhale the breath changes temperature. and see if you can keep your awareness on your breath in your nostrils, cool as it inhales changing temperature as it exhales.

And then how would you describe the change in temperature? What's the word you would use to describe. We we know it's cool on the inhale. What's the word you would describe for the temperature of the exhale?

Alright. And now let's just gently. Take that next breath, let's just inhale it, and drink it all the way as deep into our lungs as we can. We say as deep into your belly as you can. and as you exhale, see if you can soften your face, your shoulders, your back.

with your next exhale, let exhale through your mouth. softening your head, your shoulders, your torso, your hips, your legs. and then let your awareness drop into what we call the heart center. It's directly behind your sternum in the center of your chest, between the breasts.

and just notice what sensations are in your heart. Center may feel like nothing. It may be tight. It may be jittery. It may be something you can't quite explain. but I'm going to ask you to think of someone who makes your heart smile and see if you can notice the shift that comes into that that space. When you think of someone, keep thinking about them.

think about them, or you could think of your dog or your cat. You can think of a pet. It doesn't have someone or something that makes your heart smile. and then see if you can hold that feeling, just keep thinking about the person, hold that feeling. build the feeling, might be a better phrase. Think of all the wonderful things you enjoy.

And now see if you can release the thought of that person, or your pet, or whatever that you were thinking of, and still have that feeling of the heart open the heart smiling. Then this is how we're going to be opening our classes over the 6 weeks. With this blessing.

we say, may all beings but know that that includes you, it includes you. And so the blessing goes like this. May all beings have happiness, and the causes of happiness. May all beings be free from suffering, and the causes of suffering? May all beings never be separated from the joy that lies beyond suffering. and may all beings abide in equanimity. free from the attachment and anger that will hold some close and push others to Usanti, Santi Shantihi.

and so very intentionally just noticing if anything feels different or has shifted from when we opened the class, from when you 1st showed up. and now even a slight shift, notice it, acknowledge it. and then, when you're ready, gently inhale. and as you exhale, you can open your eyes

so welcome, welcome, everybody. This is our 6 week series how to live without fear and anxiety, and even what we just did in that little opening series is part of what's going to help help you help all of us learn how to live in a way where we're not well. The word, the victim of anxiety is what came to my mind. Isn't that interesting. I rarely use that word, but being in our bodies is what keeps us in the present moment.

and the the truth that I hope you all experience throughout at some point during this class. So you'll know it's true. Is that anxiety, whatever all of the things that make up anxiety for you, anxiety is a very broad, broad term, right? But it is not. It is not in the present moment.

The present moment is what it is. It is you right now, sitting. Wherever you're sitting safe, you're safe. You're all safe right now.

and the present moment is what is actually happening. The anxiety, the dread, the fear, the angst, the apprehension, the nervousness, all of those things are in our head now. They feel like they're in your body, right? They feel like they're in your body. But what we're going to learn in this class is that the mind creates these stories, and it has these thoughts and their habits.

And that's what that's what brings the anxiety. And so, if we can learn to, my hope for this class is, learn how to work with your thoughts so that your thoughts come under your control, and they're not spinning out to help you recognize what's going in your body, so you can be in charge of what is your body is experiencing, not be afraid of it. Know how to work with it.

and we're going to give you the tools to actually move through and discover what's at the root of your anxiety. because we think it's the. You know, the climate crisis. We think it's our child is on drugs, and they're going to die. We think it's I'm going to lose my job. We think it's I might lose my home. We think those are the sources of our anxiety. But they're not.

and and if that's hard to hear, just just bear with me. Just just don't take my word for it. Throughout this course. My hope is that you will see that this is true, and and it really is in the medical world. I believe they say we can help you manage your anxiety in the mindfulness, meditation, world. We know that there's a way through.

We know that there is a path out of anxiety, and you can actually live a life without anxiety. It is absolutely possible it is absolutely possible. And so at this point. before we introduce everybody, I would like to introduce my daughter, Natalie. Nat, would you say? Hi! To everybody.

Natalie Johnson: Hi.

Caren Prentice: Okay. So, Nat, if you've been reading any of the emails going out, Nat is my person who said on the phone, mom. I don't want to just manage this. I want to know that there is a way out forever. And some of you saw the email where her exact words to me. Now you want to tell them what you said to me. Do you remember.

Natalie Johnson: Well, you're yeah. I read that, and you say it was. I would rather sell my liver than feel like this ever again.

Caren Prentice: Said, I will sell my liver.

Natalie Johnson: Oh!

Caren Prentice: You can. Yeah.

Natalie Johnson: But I also remember being like, I would rather like any. Yeah, yeah.

Caren Prentice: Any limb, any part of her body she would sell. Yeah. isn't that interesting? I remember it so clearly, because I have it written down from way back then. and so so. But when we're in the fog of anxiety. we don't necessarily see things as clearly right.

So so Nat is going to be participating with us in the class this term, because I think she's got some. This valuable experience to share with all of us in terms of recognizing how important it is to get to the root of the anxiety. It's like we can help you manage it. We can help you deal with it in the moment, absolutely. But if you want to be free of it. there's a way to discover what's at the root of it. and when you figure out what's at the root of it.

Oh, okay, you're free. You're free. because once you know what's at the root, you know what to do. And you can. We use the word? Balance it. balance it. You'll hear that a lot here. Okay, so with that.

we're going to be spending 6 weeks together twice a week. This is the intention is to help us break some mind patterns and to give us the support and the techniques you can actually be practicing during the week. And there's a lot of really great information and tools we're going to be giving you.

And so in using these tools, we're, it's it's personal. It's personal, right? I mean, you're using them in your life. And everyone here is here because there's something that you've had some experience that is uncomfortable that you're not enjoying. And you want to change right?

And so part of the the healing and the balancing and the learning here comes from actually using these techniques and within coming back and sharing with us how it worked. But it didn't work because part of the goal of this group. The reason it's it's 18 of us together in person is that.

Justin Phillips: Not all things work for all people in the same way.

Caren Prentice: And so I'm here. April, April. Can you just say something so your screen will light up so the little green.

April Holt-Geiger: Good morning. Is it lighting up.

Caren Prentice: Yeah, there it is. So there's April and Kelsey. Where are you?

April Holt-Geiger: Do it.

Kelsey Williams: Morning, everyone.

Caren Prentice: Yeah. Kelsey's awake very early for Kelsey. but April and Kelsey have been meditating with me for a very long time. They've they've studied, they've studied. They've used these techniques. And I have so much confidence in their mastering of these techniques and what we're doing. So they're going to be working with me here so that we'll be able to break into smaller groups so that we can really work with you and help you use these techniques in a way that works for you.

and that's we'll do a little of that on Sundays, but on Thursdays we've got 2 sessions. One will be at for our time 6 Pacific time. So you know, if you're in the central time it'll be 6 or 8, and if you're on the East Coast time. So, Lorraine, probably easiest for you to do the the 4 o'clock, because it'll be at 7,

and then our hope is we'll find at some point today we'll ask you which one you expect to be able to attend most regularly. I mean. Obviously, if you can't make one, you can go to the other. But if we can kind of know which one you want to be at, the goal is for us to be able to break those into even smaller groups. So that as you practice the technique, you've got April or me or Kelsey with you to help you understand what you're doing and talk about what you're experiencing, because not all things work for everybody. And we we know how to adapt it and customize it to work. All right. Okay. So with that.

the main thing I want to make sure you understood is you can live a life free of this. You can. I do. I do. So. I know it's possible. Okay? And it's going to be. This is a it's it's it's an intimate group. and for, as you know, if you feel anxious that anxiety can often come because you're not feeling safe. Something bad is going to happen. Something bad is going to happen or might happen right. And so what I want to make sure right from the get-go is, we all understand that we need to be safe here.

It's really important. And so one of the things we don't want is anybody trying to solve or fix. but to simply just listen. We're going to practice just listening. just listening. Your job is listening. My job is offering solutions. Kelsey and April's job is offering the solutions. But for everybody else, if you could stick, just talk about your experience.

your experience, and when someone else is speaking we do something called hold space, which means which means just in your heart. Just hold a lot of room for them to share, and many of us were going to want to fix it or solve it. Or Oh, yeah, that happened to me once, right? You know those dynamics.

and what I want to float out there. Because this is a this is a. This is a deep class is that those are often distracting thoughts. To keep you from being present. because being present was someone else's discomfort is uncomfortable.

Do you know, am I making sense? Are people following me here. and so what we do to come out of our own uncomfortable is oh, let me fix it! Let me solve it. Oh, that happened to me, and boom! Boom! Off we go, and we don't have to sit with it. Holding space might mean it's a little awkward, or it feels a little uncomfortable. But what I want to assure you is the gift you're giving. The other person is there feeling heard? And they're they're feeling someone sees them.

and that's how we feel safe is, can you see me? Can you listen to me without needing to fix me? I'm okay just the way I am. So can we maybe, as a group, just kind of hold a sense that what we can do for each other is we don't need to fix it or solve it or judge it. We're just going to be there.

We're going to be there, and when those thoughts come up which they will, there's nothing wrong with you for having those thoughts. Our whole culture is based around those thoughts. So I want you to know right now you're going to have those thoughts. But your job when the thoughts come up is to go. Oh, oh, interesting! I want to fix, or solve, or or or say, Yeah, I've had that same experience.

Oh, okay, and just let it let the thought go, and if it comes up again, go! Oh, I see you. You want to fix or solve. Just let the thought go and come back to being present and listening. and and we'll talk more about how to do that as it goes on. So did. That is that kind of clear. I think that's our main ground rule is, let's let's make it safe for everybody. So sarcasm no place here.

Irony, no place here. Yes, places in the world. They work, they're great, but not here. And if we can just hold space, then there's no sarcasm right or any of that. So what I would like to do, since we will be spending so much time together on a level that you might not normally interact with people.

I'd like us to just take a few moments to introduce ourselves. and if you could just tell us your name where you are.

Justin Phillips: And.

Caren Prentice: Why you signed up and and for me. why you signed up, and what you want to leave with when you leave this class in 6 weeks. What do you want to leave with that? You've got that you've gained, so I'll give you a couple minutes to think about that. Just think about that. What?

Why did you come. and what do you want to gain when you leave? And please be as honest as you can, because your answers are going to shape what? What I do, what Kelsey and April, what we do over these next 6 weeks? Right? So so take a few moments.

And then the way we usually do this is, we start. I call on one person. and then they call on the person like like, well, Maggie and John would go together because they're on the same screen. But then you just call on the person kind of somewhere on the screen near you, hopefully, right next to you, but towards the end you might have to look, but to the right or the left, above or below you, and and that way you call on the next person.

So are we about ready? Who's someone who's really ready? Sasha? I'm going to call on you. You're nodding your head. You're ready okay?

Sasha Vaikhman: Hi, everyone! I'm Sasha. I'm normally in Houston. But I am on Spring break with my family. So I'm currently in Colorado. and I will be here for the next few sessions, because my kids don't have the same spring break, so I will be here for a little bit.

I am here because I am a big resistor, and I resist everything, and that is causing me to have great anxiety during these historical times, and also things that are happening in my personal life. Not all bad, some good just resisting all of it. Change everything.

And so I don't really feel that my anxiety is serving me anymore. Think a little bit of anxiety sometimes can. At least for me, was helpful to navigate but now it's just become a little. It's just become a little bit more paralyzing, and I don't like it, so I want to change it. So I'm here to to work on it.

Caren Prentice: And what do you want to when you, when you at the end of the 6 weeks, Sasha, what would you like to be able to do or to have, or what's what's an outcome you want from from this class? What do you want to know.

Sasha Vaikhman: The thing I love about. But meditating is that when I find myself in challenging situations I have tools. so I hope that at the end of this class I will have tools. I'm probably still going to have anxiety. I don't think that somehow, miraculously, after 6 weeks, I'm going to be this anxious, free individual. But I hope that when when I identify the anxiety, I have tools to to help me see it through.

Caren Prentice: Thank you, Sasha. That was absolutely beautiful, she said. So much good good stuff in there. and I'm going to know for you, Sasha, that the day is going to come where you will be anxiety-free. I'm going to know that for you. Okay, all right, go ahead. Call in the next person.

Sasha Vaikhman: I will call him Bill.

Bill Prentice: Thought that might be coming. Yeah, I'm Bill. I am in canvas about 10 feet down and 20 feet over from Karen.

Caren Prentice: He's my husband, my better half. Yes.

Bill Prentice: The the other half. I don't let's not get into better reward. I think. I hadn't realized the depths, you know. I had anxiety, and just how much it fueled some things for me. It was kind of a fuel to make me feel like I was doing something, so

I think what I want to walk away with is the recognize it when it's there. Find some way to redirect it, get free of it, and find other ways of coping with whatever's going on. I'm still working, working towards becoming a retired older gentleman, but that's seems to be, you know, getting getting pushed out, but

so I guess just the the ability to recognize it and to be rid of it, I think, recognize it and replace it with with something more productive.

That's what I got.

Bill Prentice: Becca!

Becca Muessle: Alright. Good morning, everyone. My name is Becca. I'm in Portland, so I have a little bit of a unique situation. So you were saying that it's really early for other people. For me. It's really late. I got off work at 7 this morning, so I'm a shift worker, rotating shifts which wrecks havoc on literally everything in my life.

I think that's 1 of those reasons why I get really anxious is I have no order. and I love order. I'm a type, A, and so everything in my life is not ordered at all. And so between that and then I also have bipolar disorder so trying to navigate kind of where the medicine ends and where strategy can help me. Kind of bridge. That gap is really what I'm looking forward to having

and then adding, in being a Federal employee all of the fun things right now. So there's just a lot of chaos, and I work. I also work in wildland fire. And so we deal with a lot of traumatic incidences and schism situations. So being able to have those stress management strategies will be really helpful for me.

Caren Prentice: Wonderful. What are Cism's situation?

Becca Muessle: Oh, system. So it's crisis, incident, situation, management. So, for example, last year, on a fire, I had a fatality. And so how you can handle that when you're in this situation so that it doesn't fully absorb you. Yeah, okay, yeah. So we call them schism crisis, incident situation, management.

Caren Prentice: Thank you. Thank you. Okay. All right.

Becca Muessle: Yeah, Justin, you're on my screen.

Justin Phillips: Y'all. Are we? Okay? I'm Justin Phillips. I'm in Arlington, Texas. I'm here in support of Maggie's. My stepmom, John Phillips is my father and my sister's Megan, and we're all kind of doing this as a as a family, because anxiety is so rampant that we all seem to have some degree of it right.

I have long history of anxiety. What I would like from this class would be I would like tools to learn how to stay, present or stay in the present moment. Because you made a point the very intro words it's hey? In this present moment you're actually safe, and anxiety is, is everything in the future, and I find myself.

when I do have anxious symptoms, it's always about. Yes, what's in the future? So if I could learn to stay present. I could probably enjoy life a lot more.

Caren Prentice: Yeah.

Justin Phillips: Okay.

Caren Prentice: Thank you. John.

Justin Phillips: And you do, Lorraine.

Justin Phillips: Sure.

Laureen Violante: Thank you. John. Good.

Caren Prentice: Sorry. It's Justin. Yeah.

Laureen Violante: Oh, Justin, great job of pronouncing my name for the 1st time. And thank you, becca, because I, too, have bipolar disorder type 2, and I was just diagnosed when I was 55. So I've had anxiety throughout my life, and what I was finally told is that my mania comes out as really high debilitating anxiety which I can carry for months and months.

So I just had recently met. Oh, sorry I'm in Central New York. So I know I was like, Oh, my God, I have to get up so early tomorrow, and you guys are up at 7 o'clock late night. So I have a new physician's assistant, and because she doesn't know me and never saw me when I was in the crux of things.

she's starting to reduce my meds, and wants to wean me off, and she says, no matter what was the root cause of anxiety, before she wants me to deal with what comes up for me now, so she wants me to explore the root cause of my anxiety now, and it's a little bit a little bit frightening. So

And I've already noticed a little bit with the reduction of meds, and I can at this point I can still say, Oh, that's anxiety. and it moves on and I move on. But I don't know how deep it's gonna get. So so I'm happy to be here. And yeah, so that that's what I want from class to be able to reduce the anxiety.

And at any point you know whether I'm going out and or home. And I'm a huge resistor to Sasha. So I know there's a lot of anxiety that comes with that. So thank you, everybody for listening. and I will call on Maggie, Maggie, Maggie.

Caren Prentice: Which.

Lauren Violante: Maggie, the part of our meditation group.

Maggie: This Maggie.

Lauren Violante: Just Maggie.

Maggie: Porter.

Maggie: Hi Lorraine!

Maggie: So my name's Maggie. This is my husband, John. I'll let him speak for himself, cause he can, and we're in Albuquerque and I would say my part with anxiety is that I I'm a very good barrier. you know. Maybe I might feel a little anxiety. Well up. So I just put a big glass of like. It's like a fire, and I put a big glass of water on it or something, and I just ignore until maybe someday, at a very, not good time. It'll probably explode on me, but

that could be years off, so I I would like to make sure that I have the tools to handle that when that comes about. And because I it's happened to me before that I've had anxiety attacks. It was quite a few years back. The kids were teenagers then, and they're all grown up so

it it for me at the time. It was a classic anxiety attack a lot of the clear blue sky, and I just went. and I was sure I was dying. I was riding my van to work with my commuter friends. It was a very familiar place for me to be, and they ended up having to drop me off at the emergency room, and John had to come pick me up. I had my heart was, and my blood pressure was off the rails. All that kind of stuff, and I think I'd pretty good at.

But I've done meditation and yoga for years, and not meditation as much yoga for years, and I think all of that has really helped. But I would love to have some tools that when I'm not able to just be fully in my body, that I can calm myself down without the physical activity of us, and a practitioner breathing, or

or even knowing what these little things are that give me anxiety. Perhaps right now. The little thing is the whole political climate which I find myself dreaming about. So I know that it's really bothering me. But I just during the day. I just intentionally put on blinders and try to ignore it, because I think it would totally overwhelm me. So.

That's I think. Did I answer everything.

Caren Prentice: Yes, you did. Thank you.

Maggie: And here's John.

Maggie: Good morning. My name's John and I. I've experienced some fairly traumatic for me health issues this past year, and I believe I probably have suffered from anxiety for quite some time, but I don't think it's ever manifested itself.

and over the past year it seems to exasperated because I have a I feel like I'm on a roller coaster with it, and it kind of starts to consume me, or like very choppy waters. and it impacts my ability to be happy and experience good things with my family.

and I would really like to have the tools to really kind of smooth out the seas or level out the roller coaster I've been on for the last year. And that's really why I'm here to to get those tools to kind of call my life.

Caren Prentice: You'll get them, you'll get them, you will, you will thank you. Yes, you will.

Maggie: Who do I call Megan?

Maggie: Sure, we could call Megan, because we know her name, and we don't have to get too close enough to the screen to read.

meganphillips: Hi, so I I am John's daughter, Maggie's stepdaughter. Can you hear me? Okay.

Caren Prentice: Yes. Okay.

meganphillips: My 6 year olds played piano in the background. Sorry if you hear the Star Wars theme. So. Yeah. My name is Megan. I say, I'm in Santa Fe, New Mexico. I'm mom to a 6 year old. I'm a mental health therapist.

I'm a breast cancer survivor. I just finished radiation treatment 2 weeks ago, and I'm still undergoing other types of treatment. I still battle an autoimmune disease as well for the past 10 years. So I've had a lot of health challenges as well.

yeah, I think I'm here. I know a lot about mindfulness. I know a lot about anxiety for my profession, but I think, on a personal level, to take away tools to help with health anxiety moving forward for sure. And any novel strategies that I can take to help others. you know, with what I do. Yeah, is that good.

Caren Prentice: Yes, lovely. Yes, so can you call on someone next to you, right or left, above, below. Yeah.

meganphillips: Lisa's next to me.

Lisa: My name's Lisa, and I'm out in the hills of Oregon kind of I guess it's Highlands Clark area I used to cut, say Beaver Creek, but it's not really I've been doing this for a minute. I came to Karen when I had a major breakdown, with no skills whatsoever, and been since diagnosed with anxiety disorder. I'm on the autism spectrum. I have a lot of other diagnoses, too. I don't want to bring up, but

like anxiety's part of my life, and I fought this for a long time, because I'm like, no, those problems are real, and this is real. And this story is real and the future is real, and the past is real, and and we need to, you know. And

and so I am here because I am trying to surround myself with everybody that is like minded, because when I get out there in the world I just I'm shocked that not as many people, as I thought meditated like this is just not very common, and it's very.

It's the only thing that saved my life honestly, because I'm still not in a good place, but the only place is the present moment. and that's what I'm here is just more validation, more staying in the present moment, because this works, even though I have an anxiety, disorder and autism has a lot of other things like autoimmune and anxiety, and all that.

When I it comes up I can notice. and I can. I can attend to it, and I can stay equanimous through it. even though it may be a little rougher than something else going on. But yeah, this is, it works. And so I hope to just make new friends and solidify more of the skills and learn new skills. And I also work in the mental health professions volunteering with Nami. So

it's a lot out there right now. And yeah, yeah. it's important to share what you know. that's all. Oh, I gotta call someone. Let's see, Thomas.

Thomas: Good morning. I'm Thomas, and I'm in southeast Portland. and I don't know why you you guys will get used to me over time. I express a lot of liquid emotion. I just feel things. And I just I'm so grateful to be here. And I find it

incredible. I definitely have a lot of anxiety and panic attacks in my past, and have been things that I've worked with, and I know it can be so isolating, and you feel so alone. And yet I'm staring at a whole screen of people that are willing to get together on a Sunday morning for this exact thing. And that's that's something that's inspiring, and also makes me just feel really, really good.

so why signed up? Well, that's kind of it right there, I've definitely had a lot of just the anxiety and definitely the panic disorder in the past. Some that I've worked with, and it's kind of been my own homemade 1st aid, Kit, if you will. That has gotten me to where I am in the present moment, so I'm liking to work with any time that I can improve myself, or even somebody says the promise of living without it really really hits home for me

what I'd like to leave with. Of course I'd like to leave with all of those things. But really, what I'd like to leave with is the ability to help others. because this is obviously such a thing that affects all of us, and a lot of people don't know how to ask for help or how to look for it. And if somehow and just in small ways be able to share what I have, what I've gained, that'd be cool. Yeah, yeah.

Caren Prentice: Okay.

Thomas: It's so so awesome to see everybody I'm gonna call on Erin.

Erin Ruff: Thanks, Thomas. My name is Erin. I use either she or they series pronouns where I am, is on the politically on the southern bubble of of the Portland metro area. How I've begun to think of where I am is I can hear Willamette falls out. My! And I can kind of see Willamette falls out my window, and Willamette Falls has been an important human gathering place for tens of thousands of years. And so that's

it's kind of how I've started to think of my location less in less in **Erin Ruff:** it's kind of how I've started to think of my location less in less in political terms and more in in that kind of terms.

I am here because I got an email from Karen and I usually open emails from Karen. But sometimes I don't open emails from Karen. And this one I opened, and there was a sense in my heart that this is where I was supposed to be. So that's why I'm here. And

I thought that I have been having. Hmm at least daily for a few weeks is gosh! I think I felt stable for a week in 2014, maybe And so what I hope to leave with is a space I can go at

least in myself, that feel safe when everything around me feels so unsafe a home, and I'm gonna call Natasha.

Sasha already went so.

Caren Prentice: Yeah, that's so good.

Sasha Vaikhman: It is. I'm sorry.

Erin Ruff: Yeah. How about Maggie Howell? Have you gone.

Caren Prentice: Thank you. Who's really Maggie Jones?

Maggie Howell: That's it's okay. Hi, everybody. Hi, this is the 1st time I have. I get anxiety over being called on. So I have sat here and practiced just being with everybody and not thinking about what I was gonna say, because normally I would be going down the list. So I don't sound stupid, and and you know I do it right. And I didn't do this this time. So already I am taking something from that. So I have already learned of why I'm here. My nephew had recommended this class, and I'm like anxiety. What

I deal with my anxiety. I meditate and take care of myself. I you know I live in a state of anxiety. and I'm fine. I'm fine. I in this moment. I'm fine. Everything's fine, but I live in this state of anxiety, and I I realize I don't even have the story. My body is just living it.

I don't necessarily have a reason that I can attached to it. You know, past trauma, I definitely know. But I want to live in the moment which is safe. This is safe. I'm okay, right now and again, what I've already taken away. Now, 2 things.

You know, at the beginning of this, Karen, when you said right now we're we're safe. You're safe. Your your feet are on the floor, you're you're sitting, and that's already. That's what I'm taking away. So I just want to keep that within my self, and and and not be in denial, that I do have anxiety, and I really need to work on this. So thank you. Oh, I'm in Michigan, Flint, Detroit area.

Caren Prentice: Oh!

Maggie Howell: Yeah.

Caren Prentice: Okay, thank you all. Thank you, Maggie. Can you call in somebody.

Maggie Howell: Who else? Yeah? Who was left? Kelsey Kelsey? Or yeah? Kelsey.

Kelsey Williams: Hey, Maggie? Good to see you. Hi, everyone! I'm Kelsey. I'm in Portland, North Portland, And I am here because I believe in this.

I wrote down in my notes for answering this question. I feel like I used to have generalized anxiety. I feel like now I've learned enough tools. I still struggle with it in social scenarios sometimes, but I know generally how to help myself through some of that. So I'm here for myself to just keep on adding to the toolbox and to keep on showing up for myself, but also being a therapist and being a meditation teacher.

I want to keep sharing what I know and helping who I can. So for me, what I want to leave with is more discernment around when to use which tools like, when is this going to be most effective, based on the root cause of what might be going on for myself and for others?

So I'm just really grateful to be here and glad to be with everyone. As Thomas said. Let's see, I know we haven't heard from April yet. Call on April.

April Holt-Geiger: Hi, everybody! I am Lynn Oregon, just in Oregon City, and so many things to say. But I am taking this class because I love it. I took this class 4 years ago when Karen 1st did it, and it was outside of the teacher training that I've done with Karen. It was the most profound class I've ever taken from her.

I learned more about myself in that class than I had in my entire life. So in those 6 weeks, 6 or 7 weeks, however long that was, and so it was some deep healing work that I was able to do, because of this course, and I have a daughter who is so. I don't like live with anxiety. For the most part, you know, it comes up like all of us do we have those moments of fear or trepidation that is a little out of control.

And so I've gotten the tools to know how to deal with that. But my daughter is on the autism spectrum, and has generalized anxiety, disorder, and it's very, severe, very, very severe for her, so she hardly leaves her room, and she's just turned 18. And so you you know, she's entering a whole nother developmental stage of her life, and these tools have already been so useful for her, for so that I can help her regulate. But I know we're coming into a whole nother.

you know phase that she's going to need these tools. So I need a refresher so that I can be there for her. And I'm just honored to be able to be part of it. Yeah. So there's mine. I'm gonna call on my other half Jeremy.

Jeremy Geiger: Hi! I'm Jeremy! And in the tradition of that bill set I'm about 30 feet away from April in my office.

I am here in Oregon City, just south of Portland. There's a there are internal and external reasons. I I would have. I joke a lot, and I would have said, 2, 3, 4 years ago. I'm here because April is making me be here. I would have joked that I'm not joking that today.

because the internal reasons. She's 1 of them, because I've seen the transformation. She and I came from some religious trauma and some things that we left, and we carried anxiety with us all the time the way that we were raised. You lived in fear not only of the God that was watching your every move, but that the world would end at any minute. And so you carried that and it deeply ingrained anxiety as part of not just the way you lived. But it actually was like how you got things done. If you just stay in fear all the time you'll get things done. And

I learned through teacher training and all the work I've been doing with Karen. I don't need that anymore, but it does leave a void like, what do I do instead? And my default goes back to those things, and I've made a lot of progress. I don't know if progress is the right word. I've been able to find new tools is a better way of saying that.

But I also work in an industry that is about. It's about to be consumed. And there will be many, many people who need help. So that's the external I work in software. AI, all that stuff. And what I see is very soon. There are going to be people who are really, really suffering.

I'm not suffering right now in a the work that I did with Karen last year in the teacher training, and then I lost my mom. It helped me to. I don't daily suffer anymore the way I did a year ago. I didn't think that was possible, but now I'm here.

Another really personal reason is, my dad lived with and operated his life in anxiety, and I truly believe it ended his life prematurely. He died in his mid 60 s. About 6 or 7 years ago. and I just watched it. And we all thought, That's just how it is. But I don't believe that anymore. I'm of an age that I don't want to prematurely die. April has very good genes. Her grandmother lived to her 100. I want to be here for the latter half of my life.

So that's the very personal underlying reason is, I'd like to be here a little longer, and the way I was going. I don't know that I would have been so. That's its internal, very personal, but also external. I'm in teacher training as well, and I would love to be able to help people, because the anxiety is here for many, and it's coming for many more.

Caren Prentice: Who's.

Jeremy Geiger: Left Andrea.

Andrea Weber: I would raise my hand. Good morning. so wow! 1st of all, disclosure. So Kelsey is my daughter-in-law. Since we're talking about the relationships we have with

people. So I've known Kelsey for a few years, and I'm very happy that we are all in one family.

I am between Oregon City and can be out in the countryside, at least for the balance of this year, and then I'll be moving into Canby. So I?

I'm well, no. Why am I here? I've dealt with anxiety attacks in the past. I know the chances are in my life which I hope, like, you know, will be a long one, that it's likely to happen again. It doesn't happen on a daily basis, but I'd like to understand and recognize it better in myself.

Also, I came to meditation to deal with anxiety, and I'm extremely grateful for the skills that I learned through meditation. you know, being able to focus in the moment in the here and now, and not have the circular thinking, not have the repetitive thoughts, is just such a gift. It's it's it's like having somebody throw you the the life ring, you know you're you're you're just grabbing for that rope and holding on, and oh.

so I'm very grateful for everything I learned from Karen and from all the other people that were in the Sanghas that I was part of. I think that anxiety is all around. So part of it is, I think, is several people described being able to help others through their moments, or at least guide them to where they can get help. Because I think many, many people are going through a variety of levels of anxiety, and it's only going to increase. That's what we are living through right now. And who knows how long that may go on?

So I think that for those of us who do have the skills. It's very good for us to help others when they need it. So that's part of it is that I want to be the the bridge, the bridge for people. And yeah, I'm just grateful to be here, even if it's early in the morning.

Caren Prentice: Thank you, Andrea. Thank you. It's it's getting a little harder to know who's gone and who hasn't. So I'm going to go with Liz. Yeah, Liz, would you be willing? Yeah. And then, Barb, what about barb? You go after Liz? Yeah.

Liz Haney: Hi! I'm Liz Haney. I live in Central Texas about an hour north of Austin. Maggie Porter is my sister, and she invited me to this class.

I was raised by my mother to be anxious and to have no self-worth, and then I had my relationships, and have since followed similarly. But I had an experience about 3 years ago, so example, I couldn't walk into a grocery store without like freaking out that people are. Gonna talk to me and then I had to become a public speaker.

and so I would cry every time I talked, and that's not why I'm crying now. But I had an experience 3 years ago where I had to like an awakening, I guess, and I stepped out. So

now I'm a business owner. I do public speaking. I own several businesses. I'm somewhat of a prominent figure in my very small work world.

and I would like to be able to not wake up at 3 in the morning worrying about all the work I have to do and all the stuff to do for our family and the kids. My mom's unhealthy. My husband's somewhat unhealthy and Just try not to absorb all that, and.

Caren Prentice: Feel completely responsible for everybody else's. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Liz Haney: Anxiety.

Caren Prentice: Yes.

Liz Haney: I'd like to be able to sleep through the night.

Caren Prentice: Yes, yes, thank you. Thank you, Liz. Thank you for sharing that. Yeah.

Caren Prentice: Barb. Good to see you.

Barb Bryan: Hi! Good morning. My name is Barb Bryan, and I live in northeast Portland, and I think I've probably been anxious person my whole life. But it, about 20 years ago it really hit me in a in a different way, where it kind where it more than just affecting my mind. It affected my body so it was a time when I couldn't.

I couldn't depend on my body anymore, like I had before, because I could just always power through. But then, at at that point, you know, I got nauseous. I I had rapid heartbeat. A lot of physical things happened. And of course, then it just kind of became a vicious cycle. So I'd have the physical symptoms, and then I'd have the mental symptoms, and it would just go on and on and and get out of my control. And I've tried what seems to me a lot of different things, you know. Different counseling behavioral techniques.

yoga, I've done mindfulness. And I just recently started with Karen and it. It seems like the time is right now to be able to. I feel like I need more practice with some of the tools that I've learned, and I need to use them at times when I don't need to use them, so that when I do need to use them. then it'll just be. I'll just do it, you know, and I won't spend so much time getting spinning, you know, in the physical, mental piece. And so that's I guess that's why this group looked really interesting is that there was, you know.

a couple of sessions. And it looked like there was practice and that for me applying these techniques would be hopefully a lot easier. So that's that's what I'm hoping to leave with.

Caren Prentice: Wonderful wonderful. Thank you. Barb, thank you. Yeah. darce. Do you want to go next? And then we'll have Nat. Is that everybody gone except Darce and Natalie. Everybody. Okay? All right.

Darcey Bone: Well, Hello, everybody. 1st of all, thank you for sharing so. So personally, anxiety is something that had been real present in my life. Mostly after my mom passed away I was 27. She died very suddenly, and I dealt with some intense anxiety for several years, probably close to a decade through therapy and working with Karen.

It's gotten a lot better. But I think the reason that I'm here why I signed up is because my intention for the year my word for the year is explore. and I chose. I think I came to the word because I, my dog, once in the room. She's like pounding on the door right now. Because I I have enough skills and experience to be able to live and manage it.

but I don't know that I've gotten to the root. and why it's been present in my life for so long. So that explore word just kind of was like, Oh, well, here's your opportunity. It's being handed to you. Take it so thank you. That's that's oh. sometimes my video freezes and then what do I hope to take away is like a lot of you, said the ability to help others. My husband in particular, is having a really hard time dealing with some of the all the political stuff that's going on.

My cousins have both struggled with anxiety after their loss of their parents. So it's just so needed right now. And anyway. Thank you. Glad to be here. And so Nat.

Natalie Johnson: Hi, everybody! I'm Natalie, and I'm in Camas, Washington. I'm like 7 min from where Karen and Bill are. Which is delightful. And so I'm here for a couple of reasons.

I'm here because this class really saved my life, and I don't say that lightly cry, and saying out loud like I just had. And it was the spring of 2021. And I fell apart. I think, as you know, she shared in the email. And I just hit an absolute rock bottom with anxiety and all of that stuff. And I was postpartum. And I had been in. I had panic attacks and anxiety for quite some time.

And it was the worst, and I remember like it was so much I was like, I don't want to live a life where I have to feel this way ever like it was really, that's where I was. So luckily I have an incredible mother who came in and moved in with me because I wasn't getting out of bed, and I had 2 small children. I mean, it was not a small thing.

and you know this class. It wasn't 6 weeks that I walked out, and I was anxiety free, and life was good, but it was a turning point, and it did change everything for me. And I really did. I really have lived without anxiety? Honestly, I you know it's a part. And so I'm here because it worked at the point. I'm not back because it didn't. That's that's the 1 point to remember but then

I have had such a long period of feeling so good and so strong, and really not having anxiety in my life. And then recently, some harder things just in life, I got laid off the political. My husband's Federal life happened. And I realized 2 things. One is I.

There's like just life that has to happen, that there's feelings, and I wouldn't call even what I'm feeling now anxiety. But I need to remember how to deal with hard feelings. and I had gotten so excited about not feeling anxiety that I was like, I just don't have anxiety, I don't, and I was very scared to look at it ever, and so I ignored things that needed to be looked at instead of just dealing with them, and so hit a harder point where I need to refresh my tools. If that makes sense.

And so why I'm here. What I want to take away is one cause I think I'm on. I'm trying to peel back those layers, because I really don't feel like I have anxiety anymore. I do feel fear. I do feel worry, despair, dread, and so, peeling back what those feelings are and then also, I really am here because I want to be able to help other people, and I want to be able to articulate my experience in a way, I think, that I was so excited that I got through it. I was like that never happened. And so, even when my mom describes things. I'm like I that so much of it is a fog. And when people ask me and I see them suffering, I'm like, Oh, but you don't have to. I don't like I I did it. And then it's like how and I'm like, I don't know how to explain that. Well, right? Because I'm still a little scared to look at it, because I'm so scared of how horrible I felt.

So I think there's a process I'm working through where we need to look at it and understand what really worked, and then be able to hopefully share that in a way, because I do feel so deeply and profoundly that you don't have to feel that way, and I don't like I'm a walking, living example of that. And it was so bad. And if you knew me, man, it was the worst like, it's not like I'm you know. So that's a maybe not the most articulate way. But I really that's why I'm here.

Caren Prentice: Wow! Thank you, Nat. Thank you. My heart is I am just in awe of all of you. because I know, as Maggie said, it's not easy to wait and and not be thinking about. What am I going to say? It's not even easy to show up for a class like this right? And it's a class where I mean, you're here with people you don't necessarily even know, with something that is so uncomfortable.

And so I am just in awe of all of you for for being here, for showing up and All I can say is, my goal is to help you. What you came for to make sure that you've got the tools. What you came for you have during this time, and there's so much we have to share with you.

But what i 1 of the themes I did hear was that several of you you want to be able to share this with other people right? And I'm going to give you a really simple truth. If you do it for

yourself. you can share it with someone else. But if it's a theory or something you heard. It's hollow and it doesn't work.

The only reason this worked with Nat was because it was stuff I already did. I just didn't know what I knew. If that makes sense. And my hope is that through this, through you actually practicing it and using the techniques, really understanding them that you will also know this, so that when you're in a situation where other people are.

you know, name it, whatever it might be, from something's extreme as what Becca deals with to something that might be. You know, one of those of you who are moms with your child, who just doesn't want to put on their shoes right? I mean, that can provide it. Provoke anxiety, too. Right? So so let's let's do the spectrum. You'll have the tools for the spectrum.

Will you get over in 6 weeks? This is this is this. It took Nat a year, I'd say. Was it a year a year? But this is what she did. Her life was the opportunity to heal this, balance it and learn how to do it. Different. It was future thought, future thought, just training herself. That was a future thought. That was a future. It's like Justin said earlier, right? It's in the future. It's in the future. Can you bring it back and work. If you.

we will give you the tools to make that muscle that can bring your mind back strong enough that no matter how powerful that thought is. You can back to the present moment. Okay.

so I really kind of lost track of where I want to go. I'm going to have to look at my notes here, because my heart is just so impressed with all of you. I'm just very grateful you're here, and so so my heart sincerely wants to share all of this with you, so you've got it. So I think one of the things I'd like to do.

and I don't think it will take very long is to have you. We're going to take you into 2 groups with April and Kelsey. and I would like you to come up with all of the other words that are in the word anxiety, because the word anxiety to me is actually a catch-all. That doesn't mean what it means.

and if we're going to work with your anxiety and help you move through it, we need to know what else is there dread? Fear. Fear is still a big word, apprehension, trepidation. Whatever you know, what are the things that are? Are the words that are. If you were to break your anxiety down. What are those words? And and so, April dars, are you guys April and Kelsey? Sorry are you? I can't. I can't find anybody on my screen. Is Kelsey here? Where's Kelsey? Where are you?

Oh, she's she's on a she's

Caren Prentice: oh, you're here. Okay, good. Are you? Okay? To go into the group.

Caren Prentice: Yes. she said, all good. All right, then. What I'm going to do is divide you into 2 groups, and I'm just going to give you 5 min. Not that long right? Just you're already thinking about it. What are the words that you would use when you break down that big word? Anxiety? What does it include? What are those those?

Well, is, is that enough? Okay? All right. So here, let's do that. We'll do 2 groups. Here we go all right. 5 min. Okay.

Bill Prentice: Okay.

Caren Prentice: So did we get? Did April, did you get into your group? Okay? Sorry. All right, we're figuring this out. We're figuring this out. So, Kelsey, April, would you be willing to share what all the words were that your groups came up with.

Kelsey Williams: Yeah. Some of ours were discomfort, procrastination, diversion, fear of failure, anger holding back, not taking risks, fear, loneliness. the sense of I have to do it. All. Isolation, terror, self-worth, self-loathing, failure being wrong, uniqueness, attachment, resistance, things, feeling out of control. things being not how I expected absorption, narrowed sense of walking around, and everyone staring at me. Despair and sadness.

Caren Prentice: Wow! That's a good list. Yes, yes. Do people relate to that? Those of you who weren't in that group? Right? I mean. those are all real experiences. Yes. thank you, Kelsey. April, what about your group?

April Holt-Geiger: Yeah, so it's very similar. In a lot of ways so dread and fear, sadness. loss of control, helpless being stuck, a circular rumination of thoughts, failure, turmoil, loss, being feeling unworthy. having physical manifestations like being short of breath, perseverating weakness, terror, paralysis, despair, hopelessness, overwhelmed again, paralyzed nauseous.

disconnected loneliness, constriction, free floating detachment, all encompassing tunnel vision. Feeling like the walls are coming in claustrophobic feeling trapped tightness pressure. And then it feels like it's just going to last forever.

Caren Prentice: Yeah. So I want to make this point to everybody. You're not alone. You're not alone. What if there's nothing wrong with you? What if this is just part of the human experience. and what we're going to learn is what we're here to learn is how to how to show up for these experiences in a way that brings us wisdom instead of collapse.

And one of the things I hope you can walk away with is that there's nothing wrong with you. There's nothing wrong with you from today. Take this thought, there's nothing wrong with you. This is this this experience you're having is part of what you came to learn through.

And this is part of the way meditators look at the world is we're here. We're here. Stuff is going to happen. and we can learn from this to become wiser, to become kinder, more compassionate, and to be able to show up for life and handle it and handle it.

And so that's the piece that meditation brings is, meditation has so many teachings and skills to give us. Everybody thinks meditation is sitting down, closing your eyes and watching your breath. That's this much of meditation. Well, no, okay, that's this much of meditation. The rest of this room I'm in. That's what else meditation has to offer to help us learn how to to.

Well, all the things we're going to learn in this class. So I want you to know that in the world of meditation there's nothing wrong with you. and we will get more into this in a few classes down the road for us, for today. What I really just want to just kind of get some basics are, which is that anxiety at its rootest base base is about fear, and that fear includes shame.

and if you bring all of it down, that's where you're going to get to right. So all those words you came up with there were beautiful, and I'm heartened because it's like, Oh, we're already a couple steps ahead because of your insight, the insight that you already have.

So what I'd like to do, Nat, did I see your hand go up? Nope, okay, what I'd like to do is for today. There are 3 more things I want to make sure we cover that you take away with you, and one is April. Are you ready to do your okay?

One of the things we've just talked about. Right is in anything. That big word anxiety that encompasses all those things. or up here in our head. They're not in the present moment. but the reason it feels so real. As Barb said earlier, it's in our bodies. It's this visceral physical response in our bodies is because the power of thought is far more than anything we give it credit for, and we are.

We are wired, and we'll get into this next week next Sunday more so that thinking a thought is as powerful as experiencing the event. That's how powerful our thoughts are, which is why we're going to spend a lot of time helping you. giving you all kinds of tools to work with thoughts. But so to demonstrate this April, do you want to? April's going to take us through a little meditation here. Okay.

April Holt-Geiger: Yeah, alright. So I'm just going to invite you to, as we say, find your seat and close your eyes, and you can be really comfortable. You don't have to sit in any particular posture. Just be comfortable, but do close your eyes and imagine.

Just imagine that you're going to walk into your kitchen. and you notice on the counter there's a bowl of beautiful round, bright yellow lemons. So you pick one up and you're going to bring it to your nose and smell the fragrance of the lemon.

It's tangy and clean smelling, so just take a look at your lemon. Notice the little divots and the bumps on the lemon. Yours might be firm, or it might be starting to get really ripe, so it might be a little bit springy if you gently squeeze it. so just do that, and notice the feel in your hand.

and now you reach into your drawer or on your counter, and you grab a paring knife. and I want you to slice. Open your lemon. Hearing the sound of the knife through the flesh of the lemon. and as you cut a wedge out of the lemon, you might notice the little spray of oils as they kind of float into the air. Oh, it smells so fresh!

Now go ahead and take a bite out of that wedge of lemon. Just bite into it. Let the juices coat your tongue. and just sit with the sensation in your mouth right now, and notice what's happening. Now take a breath and open your eyes.

So there was no actual lemon, was there. None of you went into your kitchen and ate a lemon, but you had an effect. There was an effect on your body, more than likely. Yeah.

Caren Prentice: How many of you did had an experience of something? Could you just put your hands up if you did have some kind of an experience. Okay, yeah, yeah. So there we go. Thank you. Liz. Okay, yes, right? It's like, and April's point is, there was no lemon.

This was all in your head. And this was in a group what we call visualization. When you've got a thought that is doing this and getting stronger and stronger, your body believes that thought just the way your body reacted to the lemon visualization.

So this this concept is really important. and it's comforting in the sense that oh, so this means that if I can change my thoughts I can change these experiences in my body. And it's like, Yes. yes, Kelsey, what were you saying.

Kelsey Williams: I think that's this. AI thing. Sorry.

Caren Prentice: Oh, it's the AI thing. Okay? All right. So so does everybody kind of willing to grasp this, that your thoughts have incredible power. And one of the things we'll talk more about next week is that our bodies are wired to protect us. and if they experience any kind of threat they are, they are designed to

kick into gear, and the heart rate go up, and the the you know, all the blood move into our internal organs so that we can get away and get safe, and the joke in the it's not a joke, but the one that's usually used in in mindfulness. Meditation is. if there is a lion coming for you, you're going to run. Your body is wired to run away and escape that tiger or that lion right.

But if your mind perceives the threat of the lion or the tiger, it is going to have the same effect on your body as if a lion or a tiger was standing right there. And in our modern world our thoughts, our thoughts, are those lions and tigers. They are the predators that we are trying to escape from.

Now, I am not in any way going to diminish the fact that many of you all of us go through really difficult, difficult situations. I'm not minimizing that at all. What I'm saying is that we can go through difficult situations without the the anxiety, without the suffering that is the teaching of meditation.

That's what meditation teaches. And I'm going to talk about that in a little bit. But first, st what I want to do is one of the ways we can become present in the moment is to be in our bodies, because, guess what your body is. Always in the present moment. your body is always always in the present moment. And so what I was going to just kind of ask Kelsey to share with you guys a little bit, was

Kelsey. Do you have any any anything you can share with the group about this journey of learning to be present in our bodies, and how we can use sensation, and how you've learned to do that.

Kelsey Williams: Yeah, I mean. I think for me, anxiety started. I didn't even

Kelsey Williams: Yeah, I mean. I think for me, anxiety started. I didn't even recognize it as anxiety, but I recognized that sensation in my chest 1st it's like that clenching, tightening. like feeling like I can't get a full breath, and then the like resistance to that experience, too, which kind of amplified it, and made that in that sensation even bigger.

So I feel like that's been my journey, that the body was kind of my way in, and then learning how to not resist that feeling or focus on other sensations in my body that were happening parallel. It's like my foot is totally fine, even though my chest feels like it's totally constricting. So that's been kind of the dance that I've gone through over the years is using the body and learning to not be afraid of the body, but sensation, as the way in.

Caren Prentice: So so listen carefully. I'm going to sort of say again what Kelsey just said, which was super super important. which is okay. Your body. Sensation in your body is always in the present moment. However, we don't want to be in our body to experience this unpleasant sensation. Right? So off we go. And is that Kelsey? Is that another way of saying what you said? Yes, yes, which is, which is

what Kelsey just described is what most of us experience. We don't want to be there. We don't want to be there. So part of our training in this class, we're going to show you how to be present in your body. how to be present in your body without needing to run away. how to be present in your body in a way that still feels safe.

so that you don't have to run away, and also how to be present in your body, so you can hear the message it's sending you. So what can happen is the experience comes in the body. And so Kels, in the beginning, right? Your chest is contracting, and this is happening. And before you were doing this. was there a story in your head

about the contraction? Was there a story you were telling us yourself that I'm asking to go back before all this work right? And did that story keep the sensation.

Kelsey Williams: Oh, yeah, yes, I was told it was asthma. I mean. Nobody even knew that it was anxiety, so I was told it was asthma, and then I just kept looking for. Oh, what could be making this happen? And like searching for this solution, and and triggers and things like that.

Caren Prentice: And so, whereas calci, it might be asthma for us somebody else it might be Oh, I'm well what Luz said really resonated with me about not being able to go in the grocery store, because I remember a time with Natalie where we went to the grocery store, and that was a huge accomplishment right now, because the the story in your head is.

I'm not going to do it. People are looking at me. Everybody's going to know I'm feeling anxious, and you've got a story going that keeps the sensations getting stronger and stronger. We have a story in our head back to the power of thought. So one of the things we're going to learn to do here is to get out of the story. stay in the body, stay with the sensation. Just be present in the sensation. Let go of the story.

Is that making sense? So we're going to be giving you exercises to help you learn how to stay out of a story. Let me just stay in my body right here with the sensations in my body, and I'm going to tell you up front. You don't have to stay any longer than is comfortable. But hopefully, while we're in class, it will be enough for you to to trust that. Oh, if I stay with that sensation.

this is the good news. If you stay with the sensation in your body, it will pass. It's not going to last. And you actually know this intellectually. because whatever you were experiencing in your body at the beginning of class, you've forgotten about the sensation in your buttocks that I was asking you to pay attention to.

and find a word to describe that sensation in your feet, the sensations tapering of the breath, the temperature. You've forgotten all about those right. They're not even present anymore. That's there's this idea of impermanence. Everything's going to pass. And we learn to trust that this is here now, and if I allow it to be. it will move through me.

I don't have to grip at it, so what I'd like to do is take us into a little actually, Kels, would you be willing to just take us into a little meditation to just focus on sensation? You willing to do

that. Okay, I'm going to have Kelsey just take us in to guide you into just experiencing a sensation and see if you can let go of any story, and just I'll let Kelsey do it. She's good at this.

Kelsey Williams: Okay, alright. So, like April said, let's find our seats. and just as you do, just letting your eyes close to help the mind, the body, go inwards and see if we can scan through the body and kind of like Karen led us at the beginning. Let's see if we can focus on sensation in our seat.

So, letting your mind travel down the base of your spine any of those spaces where your body meets. whatever it is that you're sitting on and seeing if you can bring a sense of curiosity, of fresh eyes to this sensation in your seat right here right now.

So maybe traveling through the left side of your body, in your seat. around those sits bones on the left side. and then traveling over to the right side of your seat and your sits bones over there. and just noticing is there any difference left side right side of your seat?

And how might you describe that sensation in your seat? Is it heavy? Are weighted? Is there a sense of gravity or density. or maybe numbness?

Or maybe you also feel that sense of the support rising to meet you and meet your body. Hold your body right here right now. and maybe you notice a sensation somewhere else in your body like your left foot. just letting your mind travel down into the feet left foot.

noticing if you're wearing socks or shoes. or maybe where your foot meets whatever it's resting on. So just seeing if you can bring that curiosity into the body into a place that feels safe to explore.

And when you're ready, just starting to notice your breath, maybe taking a nice deep breath. Maybe you sigh out on your exhale. and when you're ready, just slowly make your way back, maybe gently. Open your eyes, wiggle, stretch. take your time.

Caren Prentice: Before we say anything else I want. I'm going to invite you to right now with your eyes open. Just repeat to yourself right here right now I am safe. Just look around. Feel that sensation in your buttocks, Kelsey just guided you to into your feet and look around your room, saying right here right now I am safe.

and if you can say it, whisper it out loud as you say it. If you're in a place where you can do that. Go for it right here right now I'm safe. and then take a moment to simply, just actually feel that feel it deep in your bones as deep as you can right here right now I am safe.

See if you can just inhale, and as you exhale oh, right here, right now I'm safe. And then, just as Kelsey brought in that idea that you are supported. What! You are sitting on

something right here right now you are supported. You are supported. You have a floor under your feet, you have a chair supporting your body.

Let's hold that thought for just a moment. Right here. Right now I am supported. And what does that feel like? Can you? Can you surrender to right here? Right now I am safe. I am supported.

and allow yourself to feel supported, feel supported by the chair. by your room, by the floor, by the earth, you are supported. and as you feel that support you anchor into those sensations that Kelsey helped you discover right into the sensations of the body.

So just acknowledge, if you feel any kind of shift. if you felt any kind of oh, relief! I'm safe! I'm support. Take a moment to acknowledge that to kind of just don't don't brush it away. notice it, acknowledge it. Embrace it. Okay, all right.

Good job, you good job, everyone. Good job. Thank you. Kelsey. Thank you. Any questions on that, any comments, anybody. Because what I would like. This is, you know, between now and Thursday. This is this is the 1st place to start is, can you practice? And you can do this any time.

Can you practice coming into your body and recognizing right here in the physical world? This may be all. Ho, ho! Ho! We'll get there. We'll get there in the weeks to come. But physically your body right here right now you are safe. There's no tiger. There's no, you know, terrorist outside.

There's just you safe in your house, and let's see if we can just start there right here. Right now I am safe right here right now. I'm supported. Okay, and start to find those sensations anchor into the body I want. I'd like to leave you with another thought, which is.

I mentioned it earlier in the medical world. They won't tell you. You can live without anxiety. They will say we can manage your anxiety with medication or with counseling right. But meditation has a different look. Meditation has what we call the 4 noble truths. This is when the if you've heard of the Buddha.

the Buddhas realization, when he sat under that Buddha tree that Bodhi tree and said, I'm not getting up till I figured this out. I'm just not getting up till I figure this out because he had been raised in a in a in an enclave. His. His dad was like a I'm not going to say King, but he ruled in a region.

and when the Buddha was born the prophecy was that he would either become a great leader or a mystic, and his dad wanted him to take over the kingdom and rule the kingdom. so he didn't let Buddha go out anywhere. He wanted to see. His name wasn't Buddha at that point it was Shakyamuni. and

but one day he did go out. He had a wife, he had kids. He had this wonderful, wonderful life. but he escaped. He went out for the day with his with the guy who his his assistant.

and he saw somebody who was sick. and he asked the guy. He said, what is that? What is wrong with that person? Oh, that's disease! And they were driving along, and he saw somebody who was old. Old age bent over and he said, What is wrong? What is that? And his? His?

I don't remember the name. It's not assistant. If somebody remembers my brain is a little off with with in Kelsey's meditation. There! He said. Oh, that's old age. he said. That's old age, and Buddha's like Whoa, there's disease. There's suffering. There, there's old age this person is suffering. And then he saw a pyre with they were burning a body, and people wailing and wailing. And what is that he said, That's death. And he saw all this suffering, and he saw all of this going on, and when he got back he vowed that he wanted to

go out and find out what was going on in the world. and he had also seen what they call mendicants, the monks. And it's like I'm going to become a monk, and I'm going to try and become enlightened. Well, he spent decades trying, fasting, trying, begging, trying all these different ways of being in the world, and he he hadn't.

He didn't understand. He didn't understand what was the source of this suffering, and so he sat down under a Bodhi tree one day, and he said, I'm not getting up until I know what understand what is the source of suffering. And so he sat, and all night long. There were these these visions and things that we don't have time to get into today. We'll talk about it in the weeks to come.

But at 1 point he had, he realized he woke up, is what we say. He woke up, and when when he was asked to give his 1st teaching, his 1st teaching was on the 4 noble truths which are. this is the promise of meditation. Okay, everybody. Yeah. There is suffering in the world.

and suffering is a big word for it. We're dissatisfied. All those words you came up with in your groups. That's where we use the big word like anxiety. We use the word suffering in meditation, but it means all of that right. And then he said, but you know what there's a cause for suffering, there's a cause, and

Caren Prentice: once you know the cause, you can find a way out of suffering. And he said, What is the cause? The cause is craving. craving, craving, the word we use is attachment. attachment. We hold on to things we like. We want the things that make us feel good, and

the other part of our suffering is, we resist what is uncomfortable. We resist what we don't like, what Kelsey said earlier. She was resisting it. The causes of suffering at their bottom

line are attachment and resistance. attachment and resistance, which is what we say in that opening blessing.

May all beings have happiness and the causes of happiness! What's the cause of happiness? Be present? Just be present. May all beings be free from suffering and the causes of suffering? What are the causes of suffering attachment I want. I want. This makes me feel good. I don't want to lose it. Resistance that doesn't feel good. I don't want it. I don't want it

the next line. May all beings never be separated from the joy that lies beyond suffering! What's the promise that if you can let go of attachment and resistance. What you're going to discover within you is a limitless, boundless reservoir of joy. joy. but not joy at your concert. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, Joe joy, not that joy, deep, deep joy, that just

it just it grounds you, and then the last line is, and may all beings abide, abide our favorite word. If you're a big Lebowsky fan, go watch it, because at the very end the guy turns to Jeff Bridges and says so. What what is it? How do you do all this? Because he'd been through this and that and this and that, and he just kept going. He just kept going.

he said. The dude abides. the dude abides, in other words, highs and lows goods and bads. I just show up. I just show up my bathrobe and my I just. I just show up. That's what he was saying. I just show up.

so may all beings abide in equanimity. That's my wish for you. May you abide in equanimity, free from the attachment. and we say anger, but anger means push it away. I don't like it. Push it away free from the attachment and anger that holds them close and others distant.

That's that's that's my wish for you. and we can get there. The promise in meditation is, you can live without suffering. All this stuff is still going to happen. You guys, I'm not saying this stuff isn't going to happen. What I'm going to say is, you're not going to suffer anymore. You're going to just show up.

You're going to just show up. So, as Becca said, this is a crisis instant situation, management or something like that. Right close, close. It's like they're going to happen. But I promise you they will happen, and you will still be calm. You will still be okay.

So that's what we're going to learn over these next few weeks. We're going to show you we're going to give you tools and tools. We're going to start on Thursday. We have quite a few little techniques to share with you. I know Thomas isn't going to be able to make it on Thursday. So he's going to be watching one of the recordings, the recording of Thursdays, the way we're going to do Thursdays is we're going to April and Kelsey and I. We're each going to take a group. The group who stays with me will record that group, and that will be

the one that gets posted if you have to miss. So before we leave, I just wanted to. If you could just give me a quick show of hands.

there's a raise hand feature, or you can raise April Kelsley, help me track this. How many of you were thinking of coming to the 1st session? The what would be the 4 o'clock Pacific. 7 Eastern. How many of you were.

Natalie Johnson: There's 4 o'clock Pacific, and then what time.

Caren Prentice: 6 o'clock. Pacific. So how many of you? Okay. okay. Sasha. 1st session. Okay. 1st session, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Okay. And how many of you are coming to the later session? The 6 o'clock.

Thomas: Are they? 2 h sessions on Thursday.

Caren Prentice: No, it's just an hour. It's just an hour, but it's it's practice. Yeah.

Thomas: So if I'm watching the recording, it'd be better to be part of the 4 o'clock.

Caren Prentice: No, I will record. Excuse me, I will record them both. and I will will record the one that I'm leading, though, because Kelsey and April will take people into breakout rooms. But I'll stay in the main room and we'll record that for people. Yeah. So Barb and becca, do you have questions? Or is that part of the.

Barb Bryan: No, that was just my hand.

Caren Prentice: Okay, okay, all right. So tomorrow we will be creating a course page for you where we will put up this recording. We will put up a handout with the 4 noble truths we'll put up a handle with the blessing that we open with. We'll put up a handle.

I'm not sure what else. But each week your course page will have recordings, handouts, and as we get the transcripts done the transcripts for each class. and we'll we'll demonstrate that for you on Thursday we'll have that ready. We didn't get too much ready in advance, because each class takes the shape of the class.

and so we want to. We'll put up the stuff for each class afterwards. Okay, I hope you feel hopeful you can do this. There's a way out, and all you need to do right now is just just practice becoming present in the moment, which means, Feel your feet on the floor, feel your hands on your steering wheel, washing your dishes on your computer keys

and remind yourself right here right now. right here, right now, I'm safe. This is where we're going to start. Okay, all right, everyone, all right. Well, thank you. Thank you for showing up.

Thank you for showing up. We tend to. I know we're just a minute or 2 over, but we do usually end with a blessing with a Om shanti. So if you can, if you can stick around, let's go ahead, and just once again find our seats.

Justin Phillips: And Om is Om is the universal sound. It's just the sound that centers us. And so when you chant it, if you can kind of feel it in that heart center.

Caren Prentice: And Shanti means peace. Shanti means peace. So that first, st Shanti, just see if you can feel that peace inside you. Okay, so just follow along for today. So, finding our seats, feel the sensations in your buttocks in your seat, in your feet.

feel the cool breath in your nostrils flowing in present right here and then inhale. Oh, Shanti! And now second, Shanti will send it to each other. Shanti and 3, rd Shanti, we're going to send to all beings everywhere.

Shanti-hi. then the last thing we do is we bring our hands together if you want to. You don't have to. Just in front of our hearts like this. and we we end like this, may we be blessed, may we be blessed. and may we be triply blessed.

so that we may be an even greater blessing to others. And then we say, Namaste, Namaste means, I honor the divine in you, Namaste.

Erin Ruff: Namaste.

Caren Prentice: And thank you for spending your Sunday morning here with me. My heart is full, and I will be holding all of you during the weeks to come, so that you can find your way through the fear into the joy. All right.

Okay, so please unmute. So you can say goodbye to everybody, and we'll see you Thursday.

Maggie: Hi! It's great to see everybody.

Liz Haney: Bye, bye, everyone.

Caren Prentice: Bye, buddy, bye, bye.

Maggie Howell: Thank you.

