

2001-11-15: Sympathetic Joy (Brahma Viharas)

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SPEAKERS

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I hope it was sweet for you or something. And the I kind of came prepared to give talk about something and I could but as happens sometimes after I sit somehow it's not there anywhere. You know, it's it's there but I can't you know, it's kind of just floating away. Are there any concerns that you have about meditation or mindfulness or Buddhism that you would like to have addressed this evening?

Would you want to say anything on jealousy,

jealousy and mudita I don't have much of an interest in talking about jealousy. But mudita I love Elizabeth mudita is a wonderful emotion and reaction that we can have to the world around us. And it's Rita is a Pali word for sip usually translate into into English as sympathetic joy, appreciative joy, and it belongs to a group of four different emotions are four different reactions or responses or that we can have that. That are called the Brahma vihara 's, and Brahma is the ancient supreme deity of the Indian Pantheon, ancient India, and the hora means dwelling place. So some people are translated from Horace, as the divine abodes they are so wonderful. They're like they're just divine. And they're also called sublime. They're also called the Unlimited, boundless abodes. And these are loving kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity. And these four. See, the practice of mindfulness by itself is a rather wisdom neutral practice. And what I mean by that is that mindfulness is just the practice of seeing clearly what's going on. When you see clearly what's going on, then you might discover a wise response or a wise understanding of what you're looking at. But the mindfulness is just simply the act of seeing clearly in a sense, mindful There's no no wiser than a window in your house that you've managed to clean really well. Imagine you have a window your living room window hasn't been cleaned in 35 years. And, and you know, you wonder if it's dark outside or light outside you don't

really quite know what and, and How marvelous it is to actually discover you can clean the window and actually starting to get clean. And to see clearly for the first time so Wow, this is fantastic. And then you might decide that your neighbors are really nice people and sudden finally can see what they look like and but mindfulness just like a window that we clarify and holds we can really see things clearly. But it doesn't give us in and of itself any guidance about how to live our lives or what kind of choices to make on our lives. So Buddhists who look other places for that issue of what what do we use to guide our lives or what are there other places where we reference points or understandings or virtues or ethical guidelines or whatever that we can use to help make decisions about how we to live, how we can live our lives. Now, when I first came to Buddhism, I was not interested in all to have any be told by Buddhism, how to live my life or how to understand my life or how to how to help me make my decisions. I was just interested in the meditation practice to help clean the window. But what happens is that if that's all your meditation practice is, which doesn't have to be any more than that. What happens then is that the mindfulness may or may not

show you or it may or may not help you to step outside of the normal decisions are the name of values of the culture you've been growing up in or living in. So it might actually for some people, actually mindfulness can help them actually become more efficient at certain maladaptive behavior that they've been living for a long time. Occasionally that happens. I'm kind of a little bit surprised sometimes, maybe I shouldn't be. And maybe I shouldn't even mention this is not fair. But I'm usually a little bit surprised when I hear that there are meditators at the Pentagon. It kind of kind of surprises me when I hear that because now in my naive mind, I think maybe that the two kind of activities are incompatible. So what Buddhism offers then, is a series of different guidelines, or frameworks or ways of understanding to help us in situations, how to make a decision, what's the wisest course of action to take in what you see when you find yourself and if you Really take on a study of Buddhism deeply, which you don't have to do, but to some people, some people like to do it. The deep study of Buddhism is valuable not only because it's valuable in and of itself, but because for most of us, it's a radically different system than the western cultural system we find ourselves in. And it helps us kind of question some of the deepest assumptions we have, but how we live our lives by offering sometimes alternative points of view. Have you ever thought of living this way, your thought of maybe seeing situations in a little different way? So one of the less one of the very important, but less radical, perhaps suggestions that Buddhism offers for how you can live your life, how you can guide your life and how what kind of decisions you make are these four Brahma brahma vihara 's If you come to situation, how do you want to relate to the situation? You want to relate to it with jealousy? Whenever like to work with hate, you want to relate to it with shutting down and becoming numb. You want to hate when you relate to it through aversion. Through greed or generosity. There's all these different ways you can choose to relate to what you find. And if you're used to kind of stumble into your life and clearly see what's there, it might not help you question the automatic reaction how you want to respond and react. So, the Brahma vihara is our guidelines that Buddhists use for their social relationships with other people and with themselves. So the first one I called meta is loving kindness. And that's the word methods related to their word for friend. is is is a friendly response or a kind response to a situation you find yourself in to have a feeling have to be disposed or be interested in

having a friendly and kind relationship to the world around you and your neighbors and even to yourself. And Buddhists will spend time often cultivating this attitude and this feeling and this intention to go into situations with the intention to be friendly. So you don't just simply go to Safeway, and set in line to get your cereal. But you also go in there thinking, well, is this an opportunity to be friendly with someone, and maybe I'll be friendly with the person in front of me in line, we just stand there for a few minutes. And maybe they don't want to be friendly with you. But at least you're kindly disposed. You don't have to relate you talk to them. When you come to the clerk in the checkout clerk, and so you're interested in giving them we're much more interested in a kind friendly relationship to your clerk than you are getting your cereal. Where's your priorities after all, and so Buddhists, they will cultivate disability to Be friendly. And it's not considered easy to do that in all kinds of, you know, as many circumstances, but it's something we can we don't leave to chance or just how we're naturally disposed. But you can cultivate and develop the intention and the possibility of meeting different situations in a friendly way. cultivated, cultivating loving kindness.

The second one is compassion. Compassion can also be cultivated. Compassion also is a way of responding to a situation. If someone's suffering, then the appropriate response is one of compassion. If you're incapable of compassion, when somebody else is suffering, Buddhists then will take the mirror of mindfulness and fit in and bring it back to themselves and say, wait a minute, this person is suffering. I'm not feeling any compassion for that person. That seems a little bit odd. Since in Buddhism, we talk a lot about compassion, the importance of it, let me not criticize them. Sell for beat myself up for it. Let me use this mindfulness to study what's going on with me. The fact that I not, don't have compassion here. And there's a range of things you might discover, you might discover horrified anxiety. You know, gee, you know, get me away from this, this is too awful. If I open up to this, then, you know, I don't know if I can handle that level of suffering, or, I don't know if I can take responsibility for you know, I don't know what I'm gonna, you know, I don't know where my responsibility is going to kick in if I really take on this person and really feel what this person's feeling or perhaps just horrified anxiety because it reminds you something about yourself that you haven't wanted to look at. Or there's pity that pity is not the same thing as compassion, if you really pay attention. Pity is having the attitude that you're better than the other person, kind of aloof, and you're looking down I feel so sorry for you. I wish it could be better. And it's to be the recipient of that is feels very condescending. Maybe you feel numb. And so then the mindfulness just explore the numbness and why do you feel numb? But then cultivate compassion. What does it take to develop compassion? What's the understanding that brings compassion. The third one, which Elizabeth brought up is mudita. And Juanita is sympathetic joy, appreciative joy, and that's to have the ability to have appreciation in the joy of others, to share in the joy of others, and it's often related to in reverse fashion, with jealousy. Because if someone else has something really wonderful happened to them. And you're comparing yourself to that person, measuring yourself to that person. Using that person is a kind of some way of of looking at yourself. Your own wounds and desires or whatever, it can easily give birth to jealousy. So, you know, this is what comes to mind talking about this. When I was in Burma meditating, this long retreat in Burma through a number of Westerners practicing there, we were practicing for long times. I was there for eight months, eight months retreat and other people were there for longer, very serious, very intense

meditation practice. And we hardly ever talked to each other the Westerners did, but one day somehow I had an occasion to talk to a Westerner. And he kind of looked at me with this. He'd been meditating for a long time. By that time, four or five months just he looked at me and said, Did you hear? Did you hear that so and so? had reached the first stage of enlightenment. I know she I knew her back in Berkeley. No way. She couldn't have done that. No way. I

knew her.

And his, you know, his jealousy, he got the upper upper hand of it, and perfectly to comprehend because he was trying so hard to have some deep realization in his own practice. And here is something someone who he compared himself to some Burmese that come to the monastery and gotten enlightened, he would have just, you know, wouldn't have been no deal for him. But the fact that was someone he knew back from Berkeley, you know, they can all go back home to Berkeley. And, you know, she got it, but you didn't. I don't know what this you know, he was concerned about his friends. And so he was really jealous. Because I think in part if he used that that person's experience, a realization to make to have a reflection on who he was. It's a bigger statement of comparison, or that person attained something that I didn't get. And so jealousy or anger, aversion arose. Or sometimes someone else feels that you get something really wonderful happen in their life. And reminds you of the fact that you feel deprived in your life and nothing happens to us you feel jealous of that person. Or you see that the person gets lots of adulation. And it would be nice to get the adulated sometimes Wouldn't it thing, and you haven't been adulated for a few weeks now and you know, and you kind of miss it and so a few years or whatever, and so there's kind of jealousy and you kind of jealousy is kind of like wanting what that person has, I suppose. And having some feeling of aversion or anger or animosity to the person for having it. Isn't that a definition? Josie? Some I have a better one. I just made it up.

Should be a distinction between jealousy and

what's the difference

you want with the other person has or is in jealousy? I think you're trying you want what they have. for yourself.

Jealousy is where you're trying is what you don't want the other person. Oh.

So so envy is you want for the other person wants s. And lewis is suggesting that maybe jealousy we say say this way, so a subcategory of that, or a different version of that is that to anybody you want for the other person has and then then there's another feeling where you want them to stop having to take it away from them. So if you're if you're envious with someone who has a lot of money, you can just go out and win the lottery and then because of that, but if you are jealous of the person, then

there's certainly more animosity and built into it, I would think and that you want to get back at the person or take Get away from the person out of spite. You don't necessarily want to for yourself, but you want to destroy it for the person. So write

this one for yourself. You're jealous you want so so

you also see the blessings you do have you don't see what

they say so many things. So, yes.

But when you're

when you're envious, you can be happy. Because you

can be Yeah. I mean, all these things are possible whether we reflect whether we use the definitions, you know, whether we, you know, the Deaf, what else, technically is maybe less important on all the options of how humans feel But but like so if you're if your partner you know has gone gone off with someone else for a while and you feel jealous, right? You want

an adequacy?

Sometimes you feel hurt when you feel jealous, don't you? But maybe that's not exactly jealousy maybe go together. Maybe separate from jealousy Can you feel jealousy without being hurt? One you can be brilliant can feel envy without being hurt Is that right? Yeah Jealousy is very personal or entity could be, you know, I can I can be envious of the, you know, the King of Saudi Arabia for as well. But I don't take it personally.

Yes, I think the way I use it, I think of me is more toward material things in jealousy, maybe more toward emotional things like jealous of attention or jealous of love, whereas envy seems more like you'd be envious of his money or the car or whatever. And

so like my three year old son, I guess he would say, Maybe he's jealous of my attention to my mother, too much my wife and so he kind of gets in there. Sometimes it's literally goes between us and produces

So mudita is understood to be the kind of, I don't know if it's the opposite of jealousy, but it's often kind of paired. This is funny way. And mudita is to feel joy in the joy of others. Now, I don't think it necessarily means you're supposed to make out of your way to feel joy in your partner's fair. But I suppose you could. But it's a beautiful thing to feel joy and the joy of others. And it's not. It's not always so easy for people. Some people find it hard, easier to feel compassion for someone suffering. They

need to feel delight and joy in the fact that someone else has succeeded in something in their life and to share in that joy. And the fourth, these responses or emotions, is equanimity. And equanimity is probably the least understood because equanimity lends itself to the idea to suppose to be even. It's kind of like an absence of effective emotion that you know you're equanimity means you're just kind of like no reaction. Nothing fazes you, nothing bothers you just really cool. And whereas equanimity in the Buddhist tradition is a deeply heartfelt, almost like a heartfelt emotion. It comes with a really kind of a powerful strength, a powerful presence within you. It's kind of like you're so you're,

you feel so solid and so big and so, whole, unhealthy and everything that if someone comes and tells you that that, you know, they don't like gray sweaters. You know, it doesn't, it doesn't, you know, doesn't matter if someone tells you, they love gray sweaters or men, you know, just hardly affects you, right? But if you don't have that kind of liquidity, if you feel really insecure and inadequate and you're really afraid what people think of you and you feel like I was gonna everybody's ready to reject you. They already have, you know, rejected you and, and then someone comes along and says, you know, gray sweaters not so nice. And it just it just feels devastated you think so personally there's no equanimity, right? So it's more like it's not like some evenness of mind by you know, just kind of, you know, just being plain or you know, but it's kind of like a real strength, the real power of energy heartfulness that that is so much stronger than overrides anytime it's just you're not you're not going to tend to see anything and that way. Equity equanimity also arises in relation to other people. What goes on other put other people's lives through the understanding that other people are responsible for their own decisions, or more. In Buddhist language, it said, that people everyone is the inheritors of their own karma. So even though you can feel compassion and want them to be free of their suffering, if you feel responsible for their suffering, then there's very little chance for equanimity. But to feel like you're not responsible for their suffering, or the understanding, they've inherited the results of their own karma in traditional Buddhist language helps you have the kind of a healthy distance from them, where you don't feel responsible, get sucked in in an unhealthy way. It doesn't mean you stay aloof and distant from the person, it just means that you're more balanced by taking care of them. All four of these are meditation can be done as meditation practices, there's trained ourselves we develop these intentions in our meditation practice, so that we don't leave them to chance or still be nice. Once in a while these things arose. And there are people in Buddhists who actually spend months and years cultivating these to the Unreal power of powerful strengths within them in the Particular meditation tradition, the Vipassana tradition, the one that gets the most attention is loving kindness. And some people say that loving kindness is the foundation for the other three, if you develop that the other three will kind of follow. loving kindness is. If a person is either suffering or having some great success or happiness in their life, then loving kindness is just a feeling of tender friendliness, of kindness to that person. If you're friendly to someone, and they're suffering, then you're liable to feel compassion for them, your friendly attitude towards someone and they're happy, you're liable to feel joy in their happiness.

These things these four brahma vihara are very helpful, very important to attitudes towards ourselves, because many people can somehow see the value of this towards other people. And so many of us

can have these attitudes with other people. But there are many people who have none of it towards themselves. And I think probably one of the biggest deficits in America besides sleep deficit is the self compassion deficit. That I don't think that people have enough self compassion for themselves. And then with that goes, friendliness towards themselves kind of loving kindness towards themselves, and sympathetic joy. So I know people who have a hard time appreciating their own happiness and success.

So I'm raising this three year old and sometimes we have this bed night ritual ritual of this thing, all the people that love him, so have an idea and it gives a nice frame to sleep those people you know circled around are all the people who a lot of ways naming them, you know, Mommy loves you, Daddy loves you and just go through them. And so and so and Uncle so and so on. And on and on and on it goes and then then we do, then we do that I'm trying to introduce some very little or gently to loving kindness practice by saying after doing that we go, you know, Mommy loves you, they mommy be happy. Uncle eat Thai loves, you may go eat Thai be happy. And he seems to like that a lot doing this. And, but then also, sometimes I'll ask him, you know, who loves you? And there's a certain way of asking it to he knows what the right answer is. No, he knows what I'm trying to get out of this. They said to me, his name is Turin. He says, torn loves touring, may tour and be happy. And the idea being that self love is a very important quality to have and that's allowable. And it has a place in his life and you know, and it's completely approved or accepted or celebrated the fact that he would have that. And my hope is that it doesn't make him the world's biggest egotist. But rather that I don't know what kind of effect this is going to happen a three year old growing up. But the teaching in Buddhism is at least is that self love is indispensable foundation for being able to love other people, to have loving kindness towards oneself, is necessary in order to develop loving kindness towards other people around. So traditionally, in Buddhism, loving kindness is done first. It's cultivated first towards oneself. And then with that foundation, then we extend it to other people. And though occasionally, we meet people, I meet people, for whom the ability to self love is so impossible because of the amount of self hate or whenever that That they need to start with somebody else first. And after they get the hang of it with other people, then they turn around and do it towards themselves. Now these four brahma vihara 's are nowadays, at least here in the American West considered Buddhist practices, Buddhist virtues, guide guidance for how to live a life. scholars who study the Buddhist tradition, claim that these are meditation practices and attitudes that existed in India before the time of the Buddha. They were just, you know, the spiritual traditions of ancient India, these brahma vihara were already present. And the Buddha, many of the things that the Buddha adopted into his so called religion were things he just chose from the year of his religious times. And many of us have lost you know, especially here in the West have lost We don't even realize anymore how much we call Buddhism now, was not originally part of Buddhism at all. And the fact that brahma vihara 's were not originally part of Buddhism but predated Buddhism makes me think that there are like it very much because then they become more universal. And we don't have to think of them as just being a Buddhist things, but rather, I like to think of them as just being natural capacities we all have, and we can all develop them. When I when I first started doing mindfulness meditation, Vipassana, I had done Zen practice for many years. And I was first introduced to be possible in Thailand, Burma, at the Vipassana centers,

where they never did any loving kindness practice. I mean, I was never taught I was never taught it when I was there. And in the fact that my teacher in Burma, he made a point of not teaching These things because he really wanted me to stay with it, he possibly just follow that as far as you would go. And

and what I found was while I was doing this be passionate practice, that the kind of tenderizes the heart or kind of takes remove some of the barriers towards our capacity for love and joy. And I find that found myself at times, dissolving in each phenomenal pools and oceans of love and loving kindness. Whatever arose in my experience, whatever it occurred at all, in my experience, I would just meet it with this kind of tremendous feeling of love, you know, just and we're just dissolved into this puddle of whatever it was really, it was a period of phase in my practice. I think you have to have that face. Like it's necessary or anything but and then, and I don't get jealous now either. This this is this is a time for sympathetic joy. And then I went to came back to America and I continued my Vipassana practice here. And the retreat center where I practice, they started teaching, but halfway through the retreat, they started teaching loving kindness meditation. And having been as you know, Stern's and students, you know, it's kind of ascetic approach to religious life. The I thought it was really a saccharin like this, you know, emphasize on loving kindness, may you be happy, may you be safe and healthy. And I also felt it was artificial. The idea that you've kind of suddenly feel friendly or feel loving kindness, you know, I thought I just kind of took it that that only happened by accident or just happened just spontaneously given circumstances. It wasn't something you cultivated. So when my teacher started doing these meditations of loving kindness, I just tuned them out. You know, you know, it was wasn't for me, I was a Zen student, thank you. And then I, I started having this same thing started happening on my retreat here in America, I started having a strong spine kind of somewhat spontaneously through the meditation, these strong experiences of loving kindness will arise that by itself, because I think it's often happens as a result of the passionate practice. And then when the teachers came to do loving kindness, practice, I already had it. And I knew exactly what they were talking about. And then it just became is augmented what I was already feeling, attitude already have, and then I got really into it. And now I don't think of the loving kindness practice as something artificial. But I see it rather as kind of an awakening of something which is often with a potential with which was which is within me within my heart. That is really beautiful and something I delight in. And I'm very happy to do loving kindness practice now. So is that approximately answer your question? in the ballpark asks, more specifically, you're concerned.

I mean, I just I just been thinking a lot about music. And also, I guess you also mentioned about just having the wish, of being aware of our own you know, our own goodness or blessings and, you know, the wish that we would not be separated from them. I just been thinking about it, and I hadn't heard that many talks on the data specifically.

There's a reminds me of a story of a friend of mine who went to India, it was a long time because the practitioner very serious, very much involved in very mature in his spiritual life and he went to India and he visited an Indian guru.

And

and he asked the guru, something like

how he could find grace, where was grace to be found? And the girl laughed and laughed and laughed. He said, something like, your neck deep and grace, and you're asking where it is. And it was very important for this, my friend. And the fact that he you know, he lived in America where he was very relatively comfortable and you know, years of spiritual practice and certain level of maturity in his practice, the fact that he can go with other spiritual friends to India and visit this famous guru. And he had all these wonderful fortuitous circumstances that allowed him to do all these things. And it teaches your neck deep embrace the fact that you're here so you know, and you don't even see it. Many of us don't see the benefits and the grace of our lives. There's so much of it. There's so much that supports our lives and make it possible that it's really remarkable that we don't just, you know, celebrate more often. The, but most of us don't really focus that much on what is going right in our life. Because often we take it unless unless it's suddenly gone, right? Because we take it for granted. Like we deserve it or supposed to be this way. And maybe we grew up this way. You know, we grew up we were supposed to have supermarkets filled with abundant vegetables and no one thinks about this as being you know, like one of the most remarkable achievements of humankind. The fact that we can have fresh vegetables all year round was by just going into Safeway.

When's the last time you went to Safeway and kind of celebrated his ride of choice and how easy it was you know? Wow How can I've been so lucky to be born here at this time in this place and cast so much rather you kind of grumble because they don't have the right brand of you know, they have graham crackers but they don't they don't have cinnamon graham crackers mature you know, they have cinnamon Ron Carter but they don't have they don't have low fat cinnamon grab Carter's you know, and you want to talk to the supervisor manager of this, you know, how could it be this way and you leave in a huff, you know, and because we often focus on the cutting edge of our desires and cutting edge of what the problem is in the cutting edge of our definition of self when we think we need and it doesn't take much

suffering

to begin appreciating what we take for granted. So I think most of us live in states of grace. And the amazing thing is we don't know it. That's the same as gratefulness. Grace, it could be races a Christian term I guess. Grace means grace mean. I guess it means feeling of tremendous blessing. A lot of luck or benefit or wealth is tremendous welfare Mendis good blessings, tremendous

auspiciousness tremendous support and help that our life is being given a lot of beauty that's coming into our lives.

That's the same as being

grateful. I would hope that they're almost the same. I hope that grace is connected to the word latin word I believe Latin word for free. And, and for Gracia maintains Thank you maybe it's also related to, thanks to say grace, he's been speak to express your thankfulness.

More like being the recipient of a right

Right. Yeah. Yeah, the recipient of some other support. Like a fear. Yeah.

graceful? Yeah.

Yes. We're just talking about

our environment in general, just American is based so much on comparisons or competition

theory early on that just we get the feeling it's not okay to be where you are

achieving something else in order to feel great. Yeah.

The focus doesn't feel comfortable

So,

so loving kindness, sympathetic joy, compassion. Compassion is very important. In Mahayana Buddhism, compassion is the most important social emotion whereas in Theravada Buddhism, loving kindness and considered the most important and I'm not going to, you know, who's to say who's right, which is most important, but compassion is very, very important. And so there are times when we can celebrate and sympathetic joy and feeling the grace and benefits of our lives and our times when a feeling of empathy and concern for the welfare and suffering of others, is really the what's called for in a different situation. As we become freer as the mindfulness practice becomes stronger, and hopefully the person becomes more flexible, so they can respond appropriately. In these different categories, different ways, depending on what the circumstances are. Yes.

They could be seen as skills, the I like to think of them as intentions. Because if they're intentions, they don't have to be feelings. Because you have that you can have the intention to be kind towards

someone, but you might not feel kindly towards them. But it's your intentions, your wish that you could have that. And so, and when we do loving kindness, practice, we're trying to water the seed of that intention. We're not necessarily trying to make ourselves feel loving or kind that might come about product and, and in long term, the benefits come from watering the seed of intention, not from cultivating the feeling.

Write it while you're in the loving kindness practice is the practice of cultivating the intention. So every day person who is loving kindness practice every day every day will cultivate that intention. And often, the acts of loving kindness and feelings of loving kindness come in the wake of the intention. But the intention is most important because the intention is strong. Then you might find yourself in a situation where you feel really angry with someone. And then then it'll intention says, Oh, you know, I really would like that person to be well and happy. Even though the have, you know, a jerk? You know, and so somehow and then you kind of surprise surprise, you know by yourself, oh, I seem to have this new little you know, wiggling little attitude in there I never used to have around these kinds of people. And then you have to choose which one that you want to follow through on. Like I read, I didn't read it here. I read maybe on Monday night one night. The story of what's been going around ever since September 11. Maybe you've heard it about I've heard it in two different versions. One was a Native American grandfather and when was a India Indian grandfather talking to his grandson. And he says something like you know, I'm inside of me. There are two wolves. One wolf is the wolf have anger and hate and vengeance. And the other wolf is the wolf of kindness, compassion, generosity. And they're in a great struggle inside of me for supremacy and the grandson says which one is going to win? And the grandfather says, whichever, whichever one I feed. So to have that have accessible that intention, close at hand, allows the person to feed it and help help helpful away. If it hasn't been cultivated is not accessible close at hand, it can be difficult to feed it and develop it. So the skill we ask if it's a skill, the skill the attention is not a skill in this skill is learning how in a healthy way to strengthen that intention. The skill is how to recognize that intention when we need it. And how to then proceed from there. Yes,

meditation is

a different way.

The different phases will be you focusing

on the breath so

you don't actually focus on your breath and your loving kindness practice. Let's do it. On guide you through loving kindness, short, loving kindness meditation,

Take a few deep breaths, long, slow, deep breaths. And as you exhale, relax your body, your mind your thoughts.

And then take a couple of more long, slow, deep breaths. But now breathe into the area of your heart center, center of your chest and fill it up.

And then let your breath return to normal.

Take a few moments to feel the area around your heart. There's no right or wrong sensations there. But just feel that area. Become familiar with it. And however, imagine that your breath comes in and out through that area

and then take a few moments. To think kind thoughts towards yourself in whatever way you want, just kind of think kindly towards yourself.

As if you're you're as if you're your own friend

and see if you can find within yourself the wish for your own happiness. You don't have to be happy right now. But the idea within you there will be a good idea. You could be happy. Happiness is nice. There's a wish for happiness to be part of your life, greater part of your life.

Maybe you can remember some times in the life that you were happy and think, Oh yeah, it'd be nice to have be happy now. The very simple wish for your own happiness. without expectation that you can use you can succeed at it without demand that it should be so kind of open ended wish

and now taking this wish or this intention for your own well being and happiness I'm going to say certain phrases of loving kindness out loud. And then you can silence silently repeat them to yourselves whisper in your mind and each time you say them, use these phrases to kind of sink into the intention that it be water to nourish this wish or this intention within you. If you feel no intention for your own happiness, then be open to the possibility that might arise. So these are the phrases May I be happy

May I be filled with joy

May I be at ease?

May I be peaceful?

Perhaps feeling tenderness within yourself or a gentleness or kindness? Perhaps not but allowing for this intention for your happiness to grow. May I be happy

May I be filled with joy?

May I be Eddie's?

May I be peaceful?

Some people do loving kindness practice and completely forget about their breathing, paying attention to it. And some people find it's nice to coordinate the phrases with the breathing. Some people like to say, may I be on the in breath and then happy on the out breath.

In doing loving kindness, meditation and using these phrases, it can be very helpful to have a steadiness about it. The steady ongoing quality of being connected to this possibility the swish of happiness through these phrases May I be happy

May I be filled with joy

may I be at ease

May I be peaceful,

loving kindness practice can have a tenderizing effect

on our hearts.

The armor of the heart dissolves a little bit. And sometimes the opposite of loving kindness has a chance to surface if it's buried there. Some people will do this practice and feel sadness or anger or rage, grief. It's fine for that to happen. Just means the heart is opening up. And you can either continue with loving kindness practice or stop it for a while and do basic mind This towards you what you're feeling

in the practice is also done towards other people. And usually after doing it to yourself, you choose someone who cares about you. Traditionally, It's said to be a benefactor. Someone's been a benefactor in your life helped you a teacher, for example, or a parent or a friend. I like to think of it as someone who cares about you.

Maybe in your mind's eye you can remember imagine that person happy. Maybe a time when they were happy smile on their face.

And then you connect to the wish within yourself that that person could be happy. Continue to be happy. Grow and happiness and then with that simple Wish you repeat the following phrases May you be happy

May you be filled with joy

may you be at ease

May you be at peace

And then then loving kindness meditation can develop like expanding loving kindness, the wish for happiness out to different categories of people and other people. Until finally, the loving kindness practice is done. For all beings everywhere. May all beings be happy. May all beings be filled with joy. And all beings berries May all beings be peaceful. May all beings everywhere. Be happy.