

Loving Kindness (1 of 4)

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So good evening, everyone. And so, as Sheryll said, the plan for these Mondays in April is for me to give a series of talks on the practice of loving kindness, *mettā*. And usually the practice is done, often is done sequentially, where it builds on itself over time. So it can be taught consequentially as well, until we'll go through some of the different steps through these weeks. And I was happy today thinking about coming down to teach about *mettā*. It's a quality of heart of mine, which is very meaningful for me.

And now, an aspect of Buddhist practice that inspires me greatly. I didn't always know that this was part of Buddhism, and I didn't always know that it was a potential quality of people's hearts or mine, and in my case, a loving kindness. The quality of loving kindness and a practice of loving kindness snuck up on me in my Buddhist practice. And when I was a new practitioner, if someone had told me to practise loving kindness, I would have just, I don't know, water. We told them out or walked away. Or and in fact, when I was first introduced to this practice, I went to teach you the next few weeks. That is what I did. I tuned out the teachers.

The teachers started teaching and being guided loving kindness meditation in the course of a three month retreat, and was half way through the retreat. He started it in a silent retreat, and all sitting very quietly, and suddenly, "Okay, everyone. Open your heart." And I said, I couldn't believe it. I said they were disturbing me, those teachers. So I just tuned them out and continued with my meditation practice. And then with time, and as happens, I think, both with any kind of sitting practice, any kind of meditation practice on the crust, I call it my crust of my heart, the crusts around my heart, can begin to dissolve, and the heart starts to become more tender.

And as that tender presence showed itself, then lo and behold, I start discovering in myself what the teachers have been talking about. But now I had something as a personal reference

for it, and so it became alive for me. And since that time, it's been something that's been very meaningful, and I practise it and try to live by it as much as I can. So the practice of loving kindness, the word loving kindness. In Pāli, the Buddhist language, is *mettā*. In Sanskrit, it's *maitrī*, and it comes from, it's very cognates, very closely connected to the word for friend, which is *mittā*.

And in fact, sometimes people say *mettā* is a quality of friendliness, that quality of friendship you might have towards a good friend. But it's not just meant for a good friend, because *mettā* is a quality that also is to be extended towards your enemies, people who are quite difficult. People know, in convention, conventional, it's quite hard to feel love for. So it's more than friendship, friendliness, in that it's impartial, meant to include, be include everyone equally. But it doesn't start off being impartial the way it's classically taught. You start off practising it with the people you most naturally, most easily feel this very warm, friendly, loving feeling towards, or attitude towards.

And then you begin where it's easy, and then you universalize it. You slowly, systematically find ways to then open up your heart, to open up your mind, your understanding, your attitude, so you can cultivate the same friendliness with the same loving kindness or good will towards everyone until eventually the hardest part of it is to do it towards people whom you find it quite difficult. And classically we talk about the enemy. So my love or the enemy, so often referred to as a certain kind of friendliness. But one of the classic images for loving kindness is that of love, or the care, or the tenderness that a mother has towards her child. Sometimes a maternal kind of or a love or care, parental care.

In fact, the way that's worded in the ancient language, ancient texts, it's the way a mother feels towards her only child. She only has one, and that just as a mother would protect the life of her only child or have love for her only child, so with a boundless heart should one love all beings. So the kind of everyone is precious. Part of the background for this practice of *mettā* is the Buddhist evaluation or perception or understanding that other human beings are precious or dear. The word is *pema* in an ancient language, and there's an ancient teaching that. But how rare and precious it is to be born as a human being is that if you take a turtle, a blind turtle that lives in the great ocean, and once every hundred years, and only once every hundred years, the turtle pokes its head up through the surface of the ocean, and it's a blind turtle.

And in that big ocean there's a log, and in that log there's a hole that goes through it. The chances of that turtle sticking up its head into the hole in a log floating in the ocean, the blind turtle, once every hundred years. It's pretty rare, right? You have to wait a while for

that to happen. So the chances of being reborn as a human being is that rare. So it is a very special thing to be born as a human being, which sometimes is obvious to us, and sometimes we take our human life much too much for granted.

So there's an attitude of friendliness, of warmth, of preciousness, of care, tenderness, caring for human beings. So this *samādhī*, so there is a feeling or understanding in Buddhism, so some eras of Buddhism, that loving kindness is something which is innate to our human psychology, human functioning, our human heart, unless it is covered over, unless it's not given a chance to come forth. And when I've taught about loving kindness in the past, one of the primary requirements I feel for cultivating our innate good will towards others is having time. If you are in a hurry, it's kind of hard to feel goodwill, friendliness, love, care for others. We have to kind of slow down a little bit so you might have to do the valuation in your mind. What would you prefer?

Would you prefer to get a lot of things done? Would you prefer to have a life which is loving? What's more important? Now, I bet what you know, if a person from Mars came and looked at our society, they would conclude, Of course, getting a lot of things done is what these people are about. Thank you so much. There was, in Daniel Goldman's book of social and spirituality, they did a report of a study done, I think, at Princeton or Princeton Theological Seminary.

They gave something like forty theology students an assignment to go to the library and prepare a fifteen minutes or ten minutes sermon, and half of them had to do the sermon and prepare a sermon on the good samaritan. A good samaritan was a guy who kind of helped someone who was down and out in the streets some place. The old days, no one else was helping. This person stopped and took care of, helped the stranger, and the other half of the group was just random passage from the Bible. And then they had to go across campus, one at a time, at fifteen minute intervals, to go to this classroom in front of these teachers or judges. They had to kind of give their ten minute sermon.

And unbeknownst to the students, it was really a psychological experiment, and the sermon was really incidental. Or it wasn't incidental, but wasn't the main point. The point was that on their way across campus to the place where they would give their talk, they had to pass a doorway in the corridors, I guess, somewhere. And in that doorway, there was a stranger groaning or down and out suffering. And they wanted to see how many of them would stop and help the stranger. And they found that there was no difference between the number of students who stopped and helped whether they were studying or talking about the good samaritan or talking about some other random section from the Bible.

And some of them did stop, but there was a minority of the whole group. But then they began the experiment differently, where they told the students, "You know, you have got to hurry because you may be late," to one group and the other group. They say, "You have lots of time. Take your time." And the people they told, "Take your time," the majority of them stopped. And the people who said, "You know, you're in a hurry. Better get there quickly," most of those, you know, "I have important things to do."

So in considering this month of loving kindness practice, rather than thinking about going into it directly and to suddenly being loving or kind or friendly, you might first think about creating the field, the soil for loving kindness to come up. And that soil, I would like to suggest, is slowing down a little bit, giving yourself more time to let the world register, to let people register, take in the world we're living in. If we don't kind of take the time to take someone in, feel them, then we're probably less likely to feel much kindness towards them. And much more likely to feel that if we take people in and I've seen that many times in my life where I'm actually contoured but surprised, and sometimes a little bit dumb, embarrassed at the way in which I could take someone for granted, and not really see them and then get some new information about them. Maybe it just takes a few seconds to get, and so on. My whole understanding of that person changes and shifts and the wide. Why don't I take that time? Initially, you know, has been my reaction. Why don't I just take a moment to take them in and receive them?

So there is an understanding that the innate good will is innate, and that it operates if given half a chance, it'll operate in their life. And it does operate for most people in certain circumstances. It might operate in your family. Some people have good family relationships, you know. Some operate pretty naturally or easily. It might operate with some close friends, and might operate with some neighbors. It might operate with some people at work, particularly people you know, or sometimes it's preferential attitudes we have towards different people. The neighbours who live within three houses of you, you're more likely to go help them if they are in need. But the neighbours who live two blocks away, you know, you don't feel the same kind of connection or support.

So who do we open ourselves up to? It's there and the practice of loving kindness is the practice of intentionally beginning to expand that outwards. So it's not just the kind of who we would naturally or who would conventionally express our good will towards, but it's for more and more people opening it up until finally, as a Buddhist practice, it is meant to become boundless. And in fact, the practice of loving kindness is sometimes called the boundless practice, the practice that has no bounds, no boundaries because it has no boundaries or

limits. Limitless practice because it has no limits to who is included in the field of our love: boundless love, boundless good will, boundless kindness.

And when it becomes boundless, then it's said to be also called a *brahmavihāra*. And Brahmā is an ancient god, is a god of a kind of the supreme gods of the ancient Indian pantheon. And it's said that this god lives in a realm of heaven where he is constantly living in the bliss of loving kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity. These are always there. So becomes bliss of those qualities. And that's his experience. He doesn't experience pain. He doesn't experience anger. This is what he experiences, this bliss of these beautiful qualities.

And *vihāra* means a dwelling, a dwelling place, a monastery sometimes called a *vihāra*. And so *brahmavihāra* is a dwelling place of Brahmā. And because Brahmā is a god, there are some English speaking Buddhists who will translate this term as the divine abodes, which is a little bit unusual to me. I have to use the word divinity in relationship to Buddhism, but for them, it's kind of meaning for that. There is some place in Buddhism which is something that is comparable to the divine. And it's not liberation, which is the ultimate goal of Buddhism, but it's this quality of loving kindness. And similarly, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity are such a sublime, such a highly valued quality of heart that in Buddhism, it's almost like sacred, or it's divine. The quality is being developed.

So it's not meant to be left to chance. We talk about, in English, about falling in love and a kind of accident. I wasn't planning on doing that just boom, there it was, got in trouble. But rather, it's something that's cultivated and developed and cultivated. And when I first was introduced this idea of cultivating love and kindness, I thought it was too artificial. I was a Zen student, and in Zen, just give me reality, none of this sentimental stuff. And I thought, "You don't manufacture things in Zen. You just kind of like, you just go, you know, it's empty to say, you know, just going to what? It's empty." And so it felt kind of too sentimental and too artificial.

But once I discovered this quality in my own heart because of art glowing on its own, then it felt quite natural and quite healthy, appropriate to begin strengthening it, begin expanding. It soon became much more expansive and much more something that I could touch into and call upon whenever I wanted to. And I think that's one of the beautiful things of practice is that there's a variety of states, mental states or heartfelt states that can be called upon when we're familiar. When they're familiar to us, when we can have practiced them well, that can only the channels so that grove for those are really open and present. So we can evoke strong states of mindfulness, or evoke strong states of calm or concentration, or we can evoke joy.

But one of the things that can be evoked is this quality of loving kindness. It doesn't have to be artificial. It can be, but it doesn't have to be.

I find it interesting that for the Buddha, who is now creating an order of monastics that does survive down to the present times, monastics are in the Buddhist tradition trust people who give up their money so they have no personal money at all, and they are supposed to have very few possessions. The Buddha defined wealth for a monastic as loving kindness, so isn't that good? So it's portable to take it with you. And I think it's well worth reflecting. And you might want to take this series of talks on loving kindness as themes to reflect on during the week, and perhaps also hang out with friends or other people and share some of these ideas. Not to convert them anything, but to kind of stimulate certain conversation to explore this domain of human life that we can call loving kindness, good will, friendliness, whatever. And exploring the kind of message that muscle inside of you, and see where you can go with it.

And now you reflect a little bit, Why is this wealth? And how does it compare with conventional ideas of wealth? And you know, what is really most wealthy, most valuable? It reminds me of the famous. It's a kind of joke that I probably can't say well of the man who's fishing and you're now on the bank of the river or something, and this wealthy businessman comes along and says, "You're wasting your life fishing by the river. You know, you really go out in, you know, get yourself a job. You could, for example, go to the bank, take out a loan, and buy a fishing boat, and really start fishing a lot, and you know, and why should I do that?" The fisherman says a businessman says, "Well, if you're kind of successful with your fishing boat, then you can buy a fleet of fishing boats, and you can really kind of, you know, build up, and then you could save a lot of money." "And why would I want to do that?" "Well, that means when you retire you can even go fishing."

So you could, you know. You could wait to love. Now I'll get to it eventually, when I have everything lined up and I have a good job, a good education, a good partner, a good bank account, a retirement plan. You know, you know, all these things are all lined up, then I'll get around to loving humanity. Or you start it right away, you know? Maybe that's maybe. So what's most important for you? And that challenge, I think, in the Buddhist teaching is that to consider where there may be a loving kindness which has no conventional monetary value may be as much more important and valuable than the pursuit of much of the pursuit of money that people have.

It's at its essence the Buddhist practice of loving kindness has to do with intention and not feeling. Feeling might come in the wake of the intention, but it might not. But really the heart of the movement towards good will is the intention of good will, and the intention is

most classically worded in the phrase, "May you, may someone, may you be happy." It's the wish for someone else. For someone does not be someone else wish for yourself sometimes, or for someone else, some person to be happy. So it's more than kind of conventional love, where maybe there is appreciation of the person, delight in the person, certain kinds. You know, one of the qualities of *mettā* is it has no clinging or craving as part of it. So it would not be a kind of romantic love, because romantic love generally has a certain kind of desire that's built into it. You want to be with a person in some way. Love and kindness has no clinging or no desire for yourself in it.

You don't want anything for yourself from that person. You only get something from that person. It's more that you want it, that you kind of have this great feeling, I really want that person to be happy. And that's why I think the analogy that's sometimes given is that of a parent with a child, a young child like a baby. Sometimes the whole community comes around and, like a baby blessing, and everyone has made this, made this child be happy. Everyone wants, and no one's thinking about what else the child can do for me so much. So not just we have a kind of very pure delight and happiness in the child, in wanting a child to be happy and take care of them.

And I think many people have a natural instinct, I think, if they know a baby, if a baby is crying, to pick it up and hold it or try to help it in some way or want it to be happy. I remember once when my older son was maybe he was like six, seven months old, I was walking down streets in Palo Alto holding him. This is nonsense, doesn't this is a nonsense non sequitur? I apologize, but I was walking down the street and a park with him, and now some guy was kind of walking next to us, kind of passing us, and I was holding him, and my son had this completely explosively radiant smile for this person. I mean, it would have knocked most people's socks off just like this, like that. This person was like his, you know, the richest favourite person in the world. I have never seen him before, but the most favourite person in the world to see. Now I couldn't believe he couldn't believe his good luck to see that person, you know. And the person was in a huff, and Yasa, my son, you cut a huffed right on by. Blessed boy, what did he miss?

You've missed not, you know, as one of these great opportunities to feel this kind of pure love, pure delight, pure appreciation something. So loving kindness begins with the intention to wish, intention that an aspiration for someone to be happy. And sometimes things expanded further to be a someone, be happy, to be free of harm, to be peaceful, to be healthy. A variety of things, good things we want for the person. And so it's not so much a matter of finding a feeling which can be hard to manufacture, hard to call forth, but can we find the wish, the

aspiration, the desire, the feeling? Yet that would be a really good idea. If that person could be happy, what would it take for us to take in another, register another person, take in another person, and be aware of another person, and have within us not jealousy, you know, they have more than I, or not fear? Why not enough. I can, you know, even look at them because they're going to take advantage of me or whatever, or not hostility, or not, you know, a variety of different things. But rather to look at someone and find, you know, it would be really good. I'd be really happy if that person could be happy. May it be. So what reflection does that take? And what reflection does it take? So it's sincere in it, has integrity to it, so it's not just something artificial, some in sentimental or something. And again, I would say one of things it takes, it takes a little bit of time. We have to give ourselves a time to reflect in that way, to move the heart and mind in that direction.

And for some time, for some people, it really involves a radical sea change in the direction their mind is going. Sometimes our mind is so much into what we can get from the world, we get from other people, or mind is caught up in how I'm going to prove myself to other people. I want to show myself to other people, it's about me, myself, and you know mine. Some people are caught up in the world of fear of anxiety around people in social relationships. Some people are caught up in their desires for getting things. Since a few people are not incidental, whatever it might be, sometimes I might. In order to cultivate love and kindness, it does require understanding your mind, the direction your mind is going on, and saying, and through some kind of wise contemplation, wise consideration, saying, Is this direction I want to go on right now? And is there some sincere way of changing that direction so that I could, in a sincere way, awaken in myself the feeling, the desire, the wish for this person's welfare? Wouldn't that be nice again.

Many years ago, someone gave me, someone had been to Mexico, a friend of mine. I think they went down for the day of the dead some place. Oaxaca, maybe that's what they do. It's the big celebration. And they came back with a little silver heart. I don't know. He said, What they do in the day of the dead have hearts. He came back with a heart. I don't know anyway. And so she just gave me this little heart, and I didn't think about it much. I just stuck it in my pocket. And then I had to go some time later. I had to go up to San Francisco to get a new passport. And I was walking around downtown San Francisco. And I was in a grumpy mood. You know, a hard time finding parking and this and that. And I don't know why I was grumpy any more, but I know I was grumpy. And in my grumpy mood, I stuck my hand in my pocket, and lo and behold, there was a little heart and I thought of my friend. I remembered my friend's good will towards me. But my friend, why didn't we bear her good will to form

a good will? She wanted me to be happy. That was kind of behind the heart, because, you know, she wasn't expressing her love for me. I did think it more. She was expressing, you know, that she wanted me to be happy. And when I kind of felt my friend's good will towards me, my grumpiness kind of dissolved. Nice.

So, but can we know? Can we do that on our own, without relying on other people? Can we be that force? Can we have that in ourselves, that good will? And can we express that good will, that friendliness in the world around us? So what does it take to turn the mind around enough so in a sincere way, meaningful way? The direction the mind is going when we think about someone is we have good will towards them. We want them to be happy. We want their welfare. We wish it, May you be happy. May you be healthy. May you be safe. May you be at peace. So what does it take? So that's, you know, a kind of your homework for the week, I hope, is to think about it, reflect on it.

And part of the reason I want to say it that way, to offer it back to you, is that I think on. I don't think of *mettā*, of loving kindness, as being this set thing, this fixed thing. Now, I'm just going I'll hand it to you, like I do, you know, a narrow definition. This is what it is, and now fit yourself into the spot. It's more I think this each individual person needs to personalize it and find out what it means for you and there is no kind of a generic Buddhist idea of what it's supposed to be. And so you start the idea of an intention. And what is it? How does that intention get expressed in you? And how does it get life in you? How does it begin to take an expression in you, in your life around you? So I think that takes, you know, take contemplation, takes reflection. It takes getting to know yourself in that process.

And then what we do with loving kindness practice, when it's a practice, we take that intention, and we give words to give expression of it in words. In loving kindness meditation, we sit down quietly, make ourselves a little bit settled and calm. And when we feel a bit settled, then we try to find that intention. We want someone to that. We want good, have good will for someone. And then silently, in our own minds, we give a word, we give expression to that intention. And as I think most of you know, expressing a feeling is sometimes a very important quality. Some feelings really come to life when they're expressed. And there's a lot of some feelings which we keep bottled up in ourselves. They may still be nice, but it's a little bit they don't really fulfill their potential. Something different happens when we let them move through us and get expressed like generosity. You know, you can feel generous all you want, but not to act on your generosity is a short change yourself. You can have all the love in the world you want, but if you don't express it in some way, it's bottled up and it doesn't really come alive. So we try to make it come a little more alive by expressing it in words.

And so when we do loving kindness practice. So it can be your words. You can make up words, your own expression, your own sentence, your own phrase that might express that. But the idea in loving kindness meditation is you don't want to be thinking about that new phrase all the time. You want to come up with a very short stock phrase, or classically four phrases, that you can repeat over and over again. So your mind kind of starts to get steady. So mind steadies itself around this intention, around this phrase, these phrases, in the same way the mind would steady itself around the breath. When you are focusing on the breath in breath meditation, and as you know, the mind's going to wander off and think about what's for dinner, what happened yesterday, or your resentments, and then you can bring it back, and then you know, "May all beings be happy." And how could that person have said that today? Oh, and come back. "May all beings day." And so whatever it might be, the distraction might be, you got to settle yourself around these phrases. And it takes a while for them to quiet and settle the mind, and eventually the mind settles down. And when the mind gets settled and oriented or organized around these intentions, unified around it, something really beautiful begins to happen. It's almost like it starts coming alive in a different way than it can do when the mind is distracted and scattered.

So just like we have to conventionally give ourselves time for love and kindness to kind of show up. We give ourselves a whole, radically different kind of time when to allow the stuff to bubble up, when the mind is unified or settled or calm. And then we're kind of allowing these phrases to move through us as they come through us. Some people when they do this have easy access to feelings of warmth, delight, love. And some people are it doesn't come at all. You don't, doesn't have to feel loving. What's important is you're watering the seeds of those intentions. Then your seeds grow. And when I see an intention and seeds of intention grow inside of us, they don't necessarily grow visibly. So occasionally people who will do a lot of loving kindness practice, they don't feel loving. They don't feel warm particularly, or feel more loving towards anybody at the moment. Tend to see it growing. But then they're at the supermarket, and someone, you know, pulls in front of them in line, or somebody or something is remember my best example. But you find yourself kind of suddenly in a situation normally you would have been angry and barked at someone. It comes to mind, "Oh, may this person be happy."

Oh, this person. This one is one reflection people, some people use to can evoke some loving kindness is, "Oh, this person. Once upon a time had a mother who loved her and who wanted that person's best." And somehow, when you kind of put the person in the context of their mother, oh no, sometimes depends on the mother in it you have. But I've known

people who were adults who only developed a certain kind of tenderness or a soft, certain kind of new softness to their own mother when they became mothers. "Oh, she must have felt like this when I was a baby. I had no idea that this must be part of it. I know she got up in middle of the night, you know. I don't know. That was part of the deal. I thought she just kind of lied so." So we organize settling, unifying ourselves around this intention through the phrases, and start saying them over and over again, letting the mind get concentrated around it, settled around it, and in seeing bubbles up as a result. Sometimes what bubbles up as it is emotional, and sometimes is not emotional, but rather the strengthening of that intention. So that intention becomes something that becomes more your disposition and more readily available, or popping up in different situations as you go through your day.

I said earlier that the way that practice is classically done, the principle is you start with where it's easiest, the person for whom it's easiest to do it towards, and then you begin expanding out there to where it's less easy, less easy, less easy, and outward until it's people, it's hardest. So in the classic Buddhist instructions, that principle is applied, is understood to be first towards yourself. You do loving kindness towards yourself first and now, because I guess the assumption is that that's where it should be easiest back then and time since changed. And there's not, if there's many people here in at least in America for whom doing loving kindness to themselves is not easy, and it has a whole topic in itself. Some of that has to do with the there's a certain very strange conditioning that happens with a kind of individualism here in the West, and a variety of different things that affects how we see it, made people see themselves sometimes negatively to begin with. But classically, that has to start with yourself, and that requires first sitting down in meditation and figuring out some way to hold yourself in good will, to hold yourself kindly.

Sometimes when I give instructions in loving kindness, I ask people to be quiet and find some sense of tenderness, some feeling of tenderness inside, no matter how vague or subtle it might be. And then, from that place of tenderness, try then to become tender towards your self image, or your sense of self, or a kind of way you hold yourself. Maybe for some people that is not going to work. You have to personalize it. That's the way it has worked for me. But somehow, if you start with yourself, figure out some way, find a way where you can be generous, of a generous spirit, generous attitude towards yourself, generous attitude of goodwill. That takes the form and this is very simple and very significant to say it this way that takes the form of wanting, wishing happiness for yourself. That would be nice. Wouldn't it be nice if you could be happy? Wouldn't it be good? Yes, that would be a good idea. What a good doesn't mean it has to happen. The expectation that is supposed to happen, supposed to be

happy, is a hindrance for a loving kindness practice. So don't worry about that. It's simply a, Yes, babe, good. And just like it was so nice for my friend when I remembered my friend who gave me the heart, "Oh, someone was thinking well about me." All she did was so had good will. She didn't do anything for me, really, except give me the heart the same way. Maybe if you could have that good will toward yourself. Maybe a part of you could relax and say, "Wow, yes, someone cares about me. Isn't that neat?"

So some that we do this practice to ourselves, we say four phrases. It could be your own crafted phrases, or it could be the ones that I tend to use, or other people use different formulations, but more or less a modern version of the ancient ones is, "May I be happy. May I be safe. May I be healthy. And may I be at peace." May I be happy, safe, healthy, at peace. So you say that over and over again, finding that intention, that wish, that hopefully is pure, is not tied up with expectation or demand, not tied up with ideas what it can't be, it shouldn't be, I don't deserve it, but just simply finding its very simple and hopefully innocent, hopefully pure, hopefully very simple expression of good will towards yourself that's expressed in these phrases.

Oh, there's a teaching of the Buddha where he said, "If you travel the whole world over, you will find no one who is more dear than your own self, so they do that." Some people complain that maybe it's too selfish to want loving kindness towards myself. Now, it could be selfish, but it doesn't have to be, and it's not meant to be. So we do towards ourself first. If it doesn't work, if it is not easiest and most natural to do, for you to do it yourself. Then you start somewhere else maybe with someone you know, someone you care a lot for, maybe your mother or something, wherever it's easiest, and then we'll expand out from there. But I would suggest that if you're interested for this week that you try doing loving kindness towards yourself, and if it's hard, hang in there anyway, because maybe there's some purification or transformational work that can be useful to do in the process of hanging in there with that difficulty, that challenge. Maybe you'll discover how hard you are on yourself, how critical you are, and maybe it's useful to work through that and soften that.

One of the functions of loving kindness practice is, as medicine to cure ill will. That's one of the classic Buddhist antidotes to ill will. Anger is the practice of loving kindness. So if you have ill will towards yourself, then you're using the antidote. You're using the medicine. And it's not necessarily, you know, automatic, not like you take this, you know, take this pill, and you'll be fine in the morning. But it's more like you're beginning to grapple with yourself. You're kind of exploring yourself, kind of beginning to kind of break up the edges of this, and beginning to kind of find your way through it, and perhaps eventually come to a place where

there is a very pure and a very pure and unselfish wish for your own happiness. A beautiful thing.

So may all of you be happy. It would be really great, really nice. And may the people you run into this week, may they be happy, be really great. And I'll end with one little airport practice description of airport practice that I do at airports. People at airports often seen as kind of on the grumpy end of the spectrum. And sometimes I like to sit there and watch people walk by, and look at their faces, and imagine what their faces would look like if they're sitting around a dinner table where some of their best friends are favoured family people, and there's really happy, you know, delighted about something. Just the smile on their faces and twinkle in their eyes. And I have seen people go by and imagine you. They have that potential to have that look, to have that spark. And it is when I look at them that I say, "May it be so." Let it spread from here, from you to those people. Thank you.