

Dharmette: Love (13) Glowing from the Center

Gil Fronsdal

January 21, 2026

Keywords: Buddha, mettā, loving-kindness, goodwill, Buddhist practice, meditation, radiating mettā, loving-kindness practice, non-attachment, wholeness

Hello and welcome to this 13th talk about love, the lucky 13.

And the Buddha said this amazing thing, for me at least amazing. He said that you fulfill my teachings, even if you have a moment of loving-kindness, a moment of *mettā*. And so to... The Buddha said you fulfill his teachings this way. It's quite something. And so to... Hang on.

So there are a number of ways in which we don't leave love to chance, but we want to kind of make it more part of our life. Not Pollyannish, not just to cover over the difficulties of life, not to avoid the challenges that our life and our social life or political life has, but appreciating the power of love, that we can act from love and create a very different world and a very different impact than if we act from hate. We act from, or if we root ourselves in our fear. But to be rooted in kindness, to be rooted in love, as if that's the most important thing we can do. And what I mean by the most important thing is that it's not instead of other things we need to do, but it's so important it becomes the way we do the other important things.

That we engage in whatever important things, caring for our family, doing our work, caring for our communities, our friends, caring for the whole world. We do it out of that love. We still do it. And some people want to, are motivated by anger, and that's what drives their work. Some people by hatred, some people by greed, some people by their conceit. And so, but to do it from love has a very different effect, very different consequence in the world.

And the effect of love has long-term consequences that are beneficial. So we don't want to leave love to chance. In Buddhism, we do it, we focus on it intentionally. We remember it. We avail ourselves of it more often.

And I love this idea of availing ourselves, that we have the capacity for kindness, we have the capacity for friendliness, that we don't often use. Not often enough. We don't avail ourselves

of it. We don't maybe even trust it sometimes. But to trust it, to avail ourselves, to recognize it, to make room for it to operate and to be here more often, so that it doesn't just become a momentary thing, but becomes here big enough so that we are nourished, we benefit from it.

We are cultivating and growing a capacity of goodness, a capacity of wholesomeness that is essential for Buddhist practice. Because Buddhist practice is to become whole. If we limit ourselves, if we delimit ourselves, if we narrow our focus of attention, so the whole is not included, then we come to a very different conclusion about life than if we include it all. And limited life, limited, narrow, caught by attachments, caught by greed, caught by hate, um... We read the world, we read ourselves, we affect ourselves, we suffer for ourselves much more than if we can open wider and open to that which part of the whole.

And *mettā* is part of that whole. And *mettā* is not selfish, *mettā* is not limiting, *mettā* does not divide, *mettā* is something which heals the vision within ourselves and within this world. *Mettā* is something that heals selfishness because selfishness is limiting. So *mettā* comes from a very different source within. The source which is non-attached, a source which is more free.

And so to begin kind of exploring this in our lives and find where is the source of *mettā*, of goodwill, of friendliness, and to avail ourselves and live from it more often. And don't leave it a chance. Make it intentional. Make it a practice. Make it something that you go through the world. Yeah, just remind yourself, *mettā*, *mettā*.

And maybe have a way of kind of making it a bigger part of your life so you don't forget it. So it's close at hand throughout the day. And then there's also a... So that's one way is to be intentional about cultivating it and being with it, availing ourselves of it. The second is to do a meditation practice of *mettā*.

And so that the advantage of meditation practice is that we're doing it in a kind of undistracted way. We go through our life, the daily life, we have to take care of things and respond to things. In meditation, the opportunity is to have it be undisturbed, unfragmented, to have it more continuous. And that continuity is kind of like standing in the sun on a cold day, you stand there and the warmth of the sun begins to warm you slowly until you're nice and warm. But you have to stand there long enough.

If you go for a few seconds in the sun, then go into the shade, sun, shade, then the sun doesn't have a chance to warm you up. And so meditation is a time for the warmth of love to spread and to grow and have its effect on us, to have its benefits on us by taking it in, by letting

us relax with it. And there are two general ways in our Buddhist tradition that we do *mettā* practice. One is we just find the glow, find the source within us, somehow to tap into it. And through our imagination, through our sensations, through our vitality, through the warmth, and just let it radiate.

And I love this radiance of it, like turning on a light in a dark room, and then the light spreads. And it spreads to what's closest first, and then it spreads further and further. We don't see it because the speed of light is so fast, but if we could slow it down, you would see it gradually spread out, touching whatever's there. And what that means is that it's invaluable to allow your love to pass through yourself first. And I imagine it as kind of like a warmth glow, which is spreading outward.

And it spreads through the muscles, spreads through the heart, it spreads through the arms and the legs. It just spreads outward on its way into the world. And then this psychophysical system, where this body, mind that we are, becomes the heater, becomes the source, becomes the antenna from which our goodness can spread. And we don't have to wonder how this spreads. It's enough to imagine it or feel it or intend it to go outwards out into the world.

But you really start feeling the goodness that it has on us. It allows something to open. It allows for this wholeness that's part of practice to come into play. So that's called radiating loving kindness sometimes, radiating *mettā*. And the other is to use phrases, is to use the cognitive mind to help us kind of connect more fully to this and to help with this spreading.

So one is a little bit less cognitive and one is more cognitive. And for this week, I'm focusing more on this radiance. And so for today, don't let your capacity for *mettā*, for goodwill, to be... by accident, by just by circumstances that gets evoked. See what you can do to live with it close by, to avail yourself of it, to choose it, to remember it, to feel it, to speak from it, to walk in it, to walk in *mettā*, walk in goodwill.

Be this way in your world more. Avail yourself of it. And it can be secret. You don't have to let any other people know, except they might notice that you're smiling more, maybe, or something. And so as much as it is nice for you, just see what happens if you remember.

Maybe tie a string around your finger so you remember through the day, oh, *mettā*, *mettā*. Put sticky notes someplace. *Mettā*, *mettā*. Maybe sing *mettā* song. So, for this time that we're doing, love is a theme for 7 a.m., I hope that you kind of make it an important subject to reflect on, think about, live with, maybe read as you go through the day, as you live, so that it becomes more and more kind of a regular reference point for you.

And then to see what happens as a result, I'm confident you'll benefit, and maybe you'll benefit this world. Thank you.