

## Dharmette: Love (17) With Respect

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Hello and welcome to this Tuesday talk, the second in this sub-series, where the wider series is on love, and the sub-series is the five elements of love that I am offering this week.

And it's not the definitive five elements, but it's what I celebrate.

And yesterday it was appreciation, that one of the core aspects of love is a deep appreciation, a full appreciation of what is loved.

And with that appreciation comes a kind of valuing of what we see, which is a basis for respecting.

And I see that respect is an important aspect of love, that we respect others, respect their value.

We respect their autonomy.

We respect their ability to think for themselves, their views, their opinions.

Not so much, well, maybe not all their opinions and views, but we respect their right to have them.

We respect their capacity to be reflective and to think and to kind of come to their own decisions and views.

And a form of respect then is to ask people about what they believe, their views, what's happening with them.

To respect is to look again at the Latin roots of the word.

And that can take many forms.

It can take the form of listening more carefully, asking them to say something again.

Can you say that again?

Can you tell me more?

Can you... That's interesting.

I'd like to understand better.

And so this idea of looking again, hearing again, as if what that person, who the person is, is valuable to hear out.

And... The far enemy of respect is disdain, disrespect, not listening, not paying attention to someone, not being interested in what's behind these words, what's behind their beliefs, what's really happening for them, not be interested.

Respect involves some kind of interest, some kind of curiosity or interest.

Interest at what they have to say, who they are as a person, is you value, you appreciate, and you want to know more.

You want to see them more clearly.

And part of respect in Buddhism is to find, has more to do with us than them, and that is to not see with disdain, not see with prejudice, not see with preconceived ideas.

To see with fresh eyes, to see really what's here.

And I learned this many years ago, when I see a friend, after not seeing them for a while, to not carry with me my assumptions about them, because they might have changed, or their circumstances have changed.

And so it would be there fresh.

Be curious, be open, be available.

Don't rush in based on the old assumptions of what the relationship is or who they are and take moments to find out where they are, how are they, what's going on.

And this is a way of respecting them.

And it's also a way of respecting ourselves that we respect ourselves when we... evoke our capacity to be interested, to be non-judgmental, non-prejudice, without prejudice, because those are harmful for ourselves.

It limits who we are.

So this idea of looking again, being respectful, look with respect, view with respect, is a way of also cleaning up our own capacity of relating so that it allows for a cleaner love.

It allows for a better love.

Now, the near enemy of respect is ignorance or indifference or not paying attention.

And sometimes we are... not interested, or we don't engage, we leave people alone, because maybe we have too much idea of agents, their autonomy.

Maybe we have too much ideas of a different kind of bias, which is that I don't want to burden them, or I'm a nuisance for them, and so I'm going to respect them by ignoring them.

And And, but ignoring, leaving people alone can mean a lot of good respect if it's done wisely and with knowledge.

But certainly leave them alone with our judgments and our expectation and our needs.

Respect is also the opposite of wanting something from someone.

And that's the primary way we see them as an object for getting a need or getting a want or getting something back.

And that respect, they respect them as not to want anything back.

Respect them just to meet them, to see them for their own integrity, their own humanity, their own beingness.

And that's... Of course, there are times we need to have judgments and ideas and remember what happened in the past around someone.

But if we're going to have love, we want to be able to see with fresh eyes.

We want to be able to have the kind of respect that means to take a second look, take a clearer look, be interested, find out what's going on here, and value this person.

And I think valuing people's autonomy as a default is is usually pretty helpful.

And even if they can't be autonomous, then approach them with respect, with care, it's possible to approach people even with a degree of reverence, not just respect.

A reverence that sees their capacity to be independent thinkers, independent decision makers, that the most important decisions of their life, they probably do alone somehow in their own hearts and mind.

And so to accompany people, to let them feel that you're there as a friend, as a companion, as a support, but you respect them and they feel dignified, they feel respected, they feel like who they are has value because of the way we're willing to listen, because the way we clearly

offer respect for them without... that challenges of our own needs and our own wants and our own prejudice and our own opinions.

This is something like this is respect.

So the love, the love of friends, the love of lovers, the love of family, the love of our community.

There's many forms of love.

But what happens if we insert respect into it?

Respect is more than appreciation, but it takes time.

Respect takes a little bit of time, space, to really allow the person to come forth, to give space and time for the person to speak, to be known, to be felt, so that who they are as a person... they feel that we're seeing their dignity, we're seeing their value, we're seeing their maturity or something.

And this isn't always easy to do, and that's why I think having this mindfulness practice, meditation practice, can be so helpful because it helps us to kind of cleanse the... the static in the mind, all the thoughts and ideas and memories and judgments and opinions and stories that we swim in oftentimes, and have those quiet down and be still, and then see in that greater clarity of mind, how is love supported by respecting the people you're with?

How is your love for others... How does it grow if you offer them respect?

And to do it even when it's hard, even when some of the behavior maybe is something that you automatically react to and criticize and upset with.

What's it like to respect everyone and respect yourself?

And what I'd like to propose is when love has respect in it, We grow as an individual.

We benefit.

We develop a greater and richer inner life.

We grow in freedom.

That the very act of freedom, the act of moving towards freedom, moving towards respect, that transition into respect, that's where we find our freedom.

So if you're interested, I'd encourage you to... See for you what the connection is between goodwill, friendship, love, and respect.

And these are great conversations to have with friends and strangers, with yourself going for a walk or having tea.

What do you know about the relationship between respect and love?

And if you like, you might think of an synonym for respect, if that's not the word that really grabs you.

I like the word reverence myself, but maybe there's something else that you have that maybe works better.

Maybe it's simply curiosity, interest.

So thank you.

And maybe I'll take this next last minute here to announce that this Saturday with *Sati Center*, we're continuing our efforts to kind of begin exploring this field of peace chaplaincy, peace and conflict chaplaincy, which is particularly relevant always in human societies, but maybe more so right now.

And my colleague in our peace chaplaincy efforts... Kirsten Dibbert is going to be interviewing Michael Negler, who's been on the scene in the world of nonviolence and peace studies and conflict studies for probably over 50 years.

A fascinating man and also a Dharma practitioner, and so a deep connection to this topic from his own spirituality.

So that's at *Sati Center* this Saturday morning, and it's relatively short.

It might just be an hour or an hour and a half or something.

And you'll find information on the [sati.org](http://sati.org) website.

So thank you very much.