

Dharmette: Love (18) With Rapport

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Hello everyone, and welcome to this third and middle talk on the five elements of love that are some of the building blocks to better love, better practice love, the practice that *Brahmavihāras* that we have in Buddhism, offer care, *anukampā*.

And so today the topic after yesterday was respect, and today it's rapport. And the rapport is respect. It's a little bit having to do with, it's a directional. It's like how we view, how we relate to others. Rapport is something that is not just about us, not just about the other person, but it has to do with the interaction between the two people.

And as is somewhat common, there's the expression that there's you, there's me, and there's we. There's the us. There's the mutuality, what gets formed, what the combination of you and me happens when they come together. And so that, being attuned, being aware of the rapport, the relationship that's between. Sometimes there's very little rapport, sometimes there's a lot of rapport.

But to have a sense, to really have love, there needs to be something in that field that's not just about me just loving someone, but for there to be something more genuine, it's almost like there has to be some attunement, some empathy, some sense of being accompanying or being in a kind of mutual relationship between other and self. Certainly it's possible to have a lot of love that's just kind of boundless, even without any object at all. And that's a beautiful spiritual thing, love without an object that's boundless. But in many ways what we call love, and what we do when we do the *Brahmavihāras*, do *mettā*. And it really helps for that love to involve these mature qualities of resonance, of rapport.

And one way that I teach, especially like when I teach people chaplaincy, where there's very deep rapport, connection in the field of spiritual care, is I encourage people to have their

attention, 50% of their attention with others, 50% attention towards oneself. And if all the attention on the other, then we don't understand what's happening with ourselves and some of our more subconscious or unknown reactions, beliefs, opinions, bias, we don't really track it. And they can kind of come into the picture unknowingly if we think we're supposed to be fully present for someone else. If we stay instead mostly preoccupied with ourselves, fully present for ourselves, we don't pick up the cues, we don't hear well. We don't really understand what's behind the words that people say because we're not attuned to them. There's not a sense of resonance or rapport.

So the we is not understood. But if we take 50% in each place, approximately, then we track ourselves. We know what we're thinking and what we're feeling and how we're reacting and the body sensations that are going on. And we're with someone else and we're tracking them. We're aware. We're listening deeply and sensing them deeply.

And then we have all the information we need to be in harmony, to be accompanying, to know the big picture of what's happening, and create a healthy relationship. If it's all one-sided, others or oneself, it's hard to have a healthy relationship. And so this is one of the values of meditation, is to really get to know oneself. And how do we know ourselves well? The same way that we would listen to someone, a friend, when we're just there to accompany them, to attend to them, to listen, to be a good listener for them. We're not trying to change them or fix them, but we are trying to support them to know themselves better.

And so the same thing with ourselves, to be our own best friend, and in that trust that something will shift and change in a healthy direction if we simply are really attentive, accompanying ourselves without being reactive and judging, but without going along with some of the more unwholesome things we might be doing. And so this ability to have a resonance or a rapport or attunement to oneself then also translates two ways to have an attunement or a resonance or a rapport with someone else. And the one thing is that we are grounded in ourselves well enough to track in all our senses what's happening with someone else. Listening is not just through the ears. We listen or we sense through our whole body when we're really present for someone else.

And the other, as we've learned, you know, if we can attune ourselves to ourselves, we can then now do it to someone else. We're ready now to not have it be about just me, but really know the other person, to sense and be present. And then there might be between the two empathy, there might be an understanding, there might be a rapport, there might be a sense of they were attuned to something deeper within us, deeper in the other person. It's not just a surface presentation, what the person is about, that we are delighting in, respecting, appre-

ciating in a deep way. We're appreciating something about their inner life, their personality, their character, their goodness, their way of being in the world.

And so we feel a rapport, a resonance, or a kind of mutuality or delight in something deep, fuller about who they are. So I call that's the rapport, the delight, the joy, the appreciation that we started with on Monday. But the rapport means that there's a little bit of something that gets formed between the two people. Not necessarily the other person shares it. But from our point of view, of loving someone, that we feel that something there is kind of a spark, something there is warm, something there is a delightful kind of resonance that touches us in a deep way.

Something about the other person that we tune into, we're touched, and something wonderful kind of evolves as a resonance or an attunement or a... I call it a warm-hearted rapport between self and others. So it's a little bit amorphous, this world of rapport, because it has a little bit to do with the interactions that happen, the way that the subtle communication, subtle sensing and feeling, go on together, and what kind of happens between the two. And so one of the great skills in life is to not just be mindful of self, not just be mindful of other, but be mindful of the rapport, the relationship, the way of relating. And there's no right or wrong way necessarily to relate to people, or say it differently, there's not a fixed way that's the right way to be with others.

The appropriate way to be with others has to do with the way that each, both people come together, or the dynamics between them, and how they come together, and what gets formed in that relationship. So when our love is with someone we know well, that rapport is deep and mutually created, perhaps. When we love someone who doesn't know us even, we can have love for the whole world, or for others more abstractly, that rapport, that resonance, has a lot to do with what we bring to it, but to remember it's not just about us. There is something between us, between others and the abstract others and ourselves that we're opening ourselves to, we're resonating with, we're allowing for that there's something here. It's not just about us, it's not just about what we transmit outwards.

We're here to really love. We're here to let there be a possibility of a resonance. There's a possibility for a rapport. And there's an openness to something unknown, something that we can't control, something we don't set, that can form in that we, in that sense of there. And even if it's the abstract whole world, it, that sense of, that we're in rapport with it, in attunement with it, is a protection against our love being only self-centered or only, you know, only about ourselves and what we can offer.

But it's also about being ready to listen deeply, being ready to be in relationship, being ready

to be changed and affected in return. That it's a two-way street, that we're ready to love, and to receive what comes back and be changed by it, to be attuned to it, to somehow understand the relationship between us. So rapport. And I think when I've heard people talk about rapport, often a term that is closely connected to is empathy. But perhaps the way that I've included that here, but others, maybe it arouses a curiosity in you to see what you think of rapport is and how you understand rapport in relationship to how you love.

And how you, if you prefer the word attunement, or you prefer the we, the attunement to the relationship that's formed between self and others and how that shifts and changes from person to person, and what it's like to include the rapport, the relationship, the dynamic between people as part of what we attune to when we love. So, again, as I've been saying, you might want to consider this topic of rapport, maybe talk to friends and strangers about it and see what they've learned and how it's understood, and maybe you'll discover something new and interesting. And I'm not offering my words on this topic as the definitive idea of rapport, but I'm hoping that it gives you some ideas of how to explore this important topic, in the ways that you can be in relationship to others, the ways you might love. So thank you very much. And I hope that you have some occasions for nice, satisfying rapports today.