

Dharmette: Love (19) With Goodwill

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Welcome to this fourth talk on the different elements, aspects of love. And I hope that these are aspects of all the different types of love that we can experience. It's not the final description of them, but rather... the building blocks of them, that what comes together to really make our love, our kindness, our goodwill, our friendliness, our compassion, that makes it stable and strong and carry more efficacy to ourselves and to the world around us.

So the three that we've done so far is our appreciation to really appreciate others, to find what you can appreciate. The second is to respect, to view people as worthy and dignified and respect worthy. It may not what they do, but who they are as a person and what their potential is, a potential that maybe won't come forth unless there's someone, maybe you, who offers a degree of respect. And then there's rapport, where the relationship between each person, between you and others, that that relationship is a healthy relationship. That relationship resonates with what's beneficial and healing and healthy and onward leading for everyone involved. The rapport, the relationship between, allows for something deep to unfold, deep connection.

And then today is goodwill, that some basic level of goodwill, well-wishing, kind of an almost like, like I say, almost a natural kind of well-wishing, wanting to support the well-being of others. Maybe not with great ambition, with great ideas, but in simplest kind of ways of being able to meet people with goodwill that has us, we have a smile in our face maybe or in our heart where we maybe offer tea or offer to open the door for people or do a small favor, cares about whether they're comfortable or how they are, asks them how they are out of a sense of appreciation, respect, rapport. And so this capacity for goodwill, I'm translating good, using goodwill as a translation for *mettā*, M-E-T-T-A, a word that's often translated into English as loving kindness, which I love the expression loving kindness, but sometimes I feel that it sets a

high standard for how loving we are and how kind we are. That maybe isn't always realistic or isn't really always what's appropriate. And so I like the more humble word, goodwill, because it's easier to imagine having goodwill for people we're challenged by. It's easier than it is to have loving kindness.

It's easier for me to imagine goodwill to people who they find in a certain kind of way difficult to love or who feel disagreeable in some strong way. But I can still have goodwill. And it's a very, very basic... It also allows me to have some positive regard for strangers and people for whom. It doesn't make sense to meet with anything stronger than a basic friendly attitude. But to feel that this goodwill, this friendliness is good for you to have, that it comes out of you because it's a healthy part of yourself.

It's not a should, it's not a requirement, it's not a technique, it's not a policy. But rather, it's a practice of settling or finding a place of being at ease with oneself, enough that we can feel and sense the place where we have a kind of natural goodwill. And what I've learned is that if I don't have that, don't have access to that, that is a time for practice. That's the time to stop, slow down, catch my breath, kind of catch myself, come back into myself. For me, mostly if I don't have an easy access to goodwill, I'm not really in myself. I'm preoccupied with something, I'm involved with trying to do too many things, and so just stop, come back, feel here.

Don't override that movement of coming back into oneself, settling into oneself, in order to have goodwill, because then the goodwill is not really, it's more surface-like, and maybe people can feel the difference. But to settle back into oneself, to become oneself again, then the goodwill is going to have more embodiment, more fullness. I think it's going to have more efficacy, because people can feel the difference, but in kind of a surface goodwill versus something that seems to suffuse or grow out of oneself. And so this is also where the goodwill, the loving-kindness, the *mettā* is really supported by taking the time or having the ability to appreciate others. If we don't appreciate them, where's that goodwill going to come? It's probably not, non-appreciation is probably also a sign of not being connected deeply.

I'm going to wait a moment. The street sweepers are going by. I don't know if you could hear it. So to have appreciation, to have respect. And again, it doesn't have to be dramatic. It doesn't have to be, okay, the street sweeper has gone by.

It's very nice that they come to clean the streets periodically, especially this time of year where there are still leaves on the street. And so respect, rapport, this is probably a really key thing to begin appreciating, a really key thing to begin, including as part of our span of attention, what is the rapport that we have with people? Even as simply as going to a store

and opening the door for someone else to come in, or stepping aside to let someone who has challenged with their shopping cart to get by, to not just do it perfunctory or just do it out of some simple kind of care or something where you turn away and look at the magazines or look at something else. But to stand there and open the door, make room for someone to pass, where you're not imposing people, you're not nothing required from others, but you're there available and to feel and sense, oh, this is a human being. So if they looked at you or said, thank you, you're ready to smile back and receive it.

To live a life of rapport is that live an enriched life. And with appreciation, respect, and rapport, it's easier to have goodwill. Goodwill is one of the forms of love that we emphasize in Buddhism. *Mettā*. The word *mettā* comes from the word friend. *Mitta*. It's related to it. So sometimes it's considered to be a kind of a fundamental, deep kind of form of friendliness that we can have. And... and to practice that friendliness, to practice that goodwill.

And I would encourage you to spend the next 24 hours seeing if you could have, for the strangers you see, in this world that you see on the streets, you see in places where people are congregated, in stores, at work. No one has to know, but take the time to be at ease enough, not rushing around enough, to take little goodwill moments and see if you can find in yourself maybe it's a really basic, really simple, kind regard, a really simple kind of positive regard, goodwill, kind feelings, maybe of appreciation, maybe of respect, maybe of... that this is the person, it's worthy to resonate, to feel connected, to feel, to have a warm-hearted relatedness with that person, even if they don't know. And so that would be the exercise today is, if you want a more dramatic name for it, secret acts of kindness, not even acts, secret The street cleaner is coming back.

So if we relax and breathe, we can use that as a reminder to clean ourselves, our minds, our hearts. There. So in the same way, private acts, private movements of goodwill, acting on goodwill, that's for later. But for now, to just develop a habit for the day of finding goodwill, finding how to have goodwill in the simplest way for the people you don't know that you'll be encountering. And of course, it's nice to do to the people you do know as well, but maybe it's the exercise is one of stretching yourself into the world of those you don't know, to have a residence rapport there.

So thank you very much, and... Tomorrow we'll do the last of the five elements for love, and then we'll move on. We'll continue with it over these next weeks. Thank you.