

Guided Meditation: Centeredness and Pleasure of Metta

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Warm greetings from Redwood City. I am C here. And today we continue on this sub-theme of the week, which is *mettā samādhi*, the *samādhi* of *mettā*. And for it to be a *samādhi*... I'd like to emphasize two things that are important. And those two things, these two things are important for *samādhi*, but also important for *mettā*, for whatever *mettā* is for you. Kindness, goodwill, loving-kindness, love.

It has these qualities built into it, which are a little bit unusually, not so usually associated with love. One is that it is a unification, a gathering together, a becoming centered, we can say, centered on oneself. Centered right here at the junction, at the nexus of all our experience within and outside and inside. That we're centered, we're grounded, settled. And so with *samādhi*, we're not reaching forward to have something. We're not trying to get something.

We're not searching for something. We're not expecting something. We're not trying to make something happen in a certain way. The idea of there's no need to be reciprocated, to get something in return. *Samādhi* is kind of a beautiful, holistic, self-contained experience where we're settled at home here in this experience right now. And so is *mettā*.

The second is that *samādhi* involves pleasure. And explicitly sometimes deeper *samādhi* is associated with joy and happiness, sometimes with bliss even. But to some degree there is a pleasure without it needing to be dramatic or special. But there's something extremely pleasant about and satisfying and nice about the experience of *samādhi*. And it's a pleasure which is self-reinforcing, pleasure which is self-inviting. Here, come here, this is good.

This is a good pleasure. And *mettā*, the *samādhi* of *mettā*, also has pleasure. There's pleasure in love, but not the pleasure of sensual pleasure, not the pleasure of receiving and getting something, but a self-contained pleasure of something that's really centered and grounded

and flowing here in ourselves. And so these two qualities we tap into to get concentrated, to get absorbed, to get completely connected here in a groundedness, a subtleness, centeredness here, and we search for the pleasure of love. And let that pleasure of love be a gathering of more and more this attention here.

So to assume a meditation posture, and some people, when they do *mettā* meditation, they make sure the posture is pain-free, if that's possible. The posture is tension-free, without collapsing or sinking or luxuriating. So then to feel the body, maybe gently closing your eyes, and as you feel your body, to see where in the body there's a feeling of pleasure. Pleasantness doesn't have to be dramatic. It could be a subtle vibration, glow, warmth. And ideally, this pleasure is not there because there's something that's touching you or doing something to you.

It's just kind of something as pleasant just being alive right now in the body. Maybe what's pleasant in the mind is the pleasure of sitting in a meditation posture with nothing else you need to do but to discover something new about your capacity to love. Taking a few fuller breaths, and as you exhale, to relax into a centered place within, a grounded place within, the end of the exhale, where the inhale begins from this grounded place. And while something stays rooted there, there is a place. There's the growth and the expansion of the inhale through the body. And as you breathe in and out, if it's easy enough, breathe through or breathe with whatever pleasure that's here and now in your body, a simple pleasure maybe connected to the simplicity of being.

And then think of someone that's easy for you to have *mettā*, goodwill, uncomplicated friendliness, kindness, love, where you need nothing back from this person. But it delights you to know the person. It brings you a smile, a joy, just to know that this person is in your life. And this joy, this delight, can you find the pleasure of your positive regard for this person. Maybe it takes a form of a smile, a smile in the heart. And if you have love or kindness, goodwill for this person, say yes to it.

A yes that allows you to inhabit the pleasure of the goodwill, wherever that pleasure is. And then connecting breathing with the pleasure, connecting breathing to a centered place within, gathering a sense of centeredness, breathing, and the pleasure of *mettā*, goodwill, and wishing them well. Wishing your person, may you be happy. And seeing if you can settle into that wish, to feel the pleasure behind it, the love, quieting, distracting thoughts, so you can dwell in the simplicity of being centered here with goodwill for your friend, your person, enjoying the pleasure of love, of goodwill as a general mood or atmosphere that keeps you welcomed, invited, into the immediate world, the body, the heart, the breathing, infused

with goodwill, feeling the pleasure that's available, however subtle it is in the body, in the sensations of breathing, maybe in a place of inner quiet stillness, and to have that pleasure together with love, goodwill, that needs nothing in return, that is just a radiance, a glow, a field of subtle pleasure in which you breathe, within which you wish well to others.

May you be happy. And as we come to the end of this sitting, to appreciate, if you can, the simple pleasure of goodwill, holding others in a positive regard with generosity, kindness, in which there's pleasure and comfort just being this way, just having love. No need for it to be reciprocated. No need for others to know you have this kind of *mettā* and to recognize that it might be really nice for you to be this way, and that it's okay to stay this way towards all beings, even those that are difficult. Because to not do that diminishes you. You lose touch with this pleasure in the self-contained place of being centered in here and now, the *mettā* of *samādhi*.

Allow your *mettā* to go out into the world, to glow, to flow unto all beings equally. May all beings be happy. May all beings be safe. May all beings be peaceful. May all beings be free. And may all beings stay close to their own capacity, their own ability to be nourished, to be healed, delighted by their own capacity to love, their own capacity for goodwill.

May all beings enjoy the benefits of goodwill. Thank you.