

## Dharmette: Love (29) Metta Samadhi

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So hello and welcome to this continuation of talks about Buddhist practices of love. And this week it's the \*samādhi\* of \*mettā\*, of goodwill. And \*samādhi\* is a state of absorption or meditative immersion in this goodwill, so that there's not much else going on for us. We're not distracted, we're not preoccupied with other things. More and more all of who we are, including our basic attitude in which we are with ourselves and our experience, is one associated with goodwill, or the variations of it, depending on what you prefer. Goodwill, love, kindness, loving-kindness, and friendliness.

And it's possible to have that become kind of the overall atmosphere, the overall attitude in which we're operating and being. And it's quite something to dip into that and have that be the fullness of our experience. And that that's possible is what meditators can discover. And that's true with most meditation, that we discover we don't have to be fragmented, distracted, that we don't have to be caught and stuck in reactive attitudes. Because those are extra work, those are tension. And as the tension falls away, the extra work falls away, we tend to be left with a simplicity of being.

And the simplicity of relaxed being tends to be one where there's more care, more kindness, more gentleness, more peacefulness in which we meet and be with experience. And that becomes a place now for the growing of goodwill, kind of hopefully a natural goodwill. But it's possible to keep kind of cultivating it and focusing on it. So it really becomes the place that a concentration really takes hold. Really we get absorbed and focused on the experience of goodwill. And it's a remarkable thing to have that to begin happening, and to make it more and more part of what we do in our life.

And we learned so much this way about what is extra, what is the extra work, what are the attitudes we don't need. So to really get into these deeper experiences of \*mettā\*, that \*mettā\*

meditation, there are different kind of touchstones or different aspects of it that are helpful for being able to dip down and put aside the distractions and preoccupations we have. One is to change the attitude we have, to recognize what attitude you're coming with into the meditation. And some people have default attitudes. They live with their lives. Some have a variety that come through.

But there might be that the attitude is one of aversion, just not liking things or overwhelm or anxiety or a sense of should and needs and a sense of maybe not being right or being inadequate in some way. And kind of these default attitudes that sometimes are almost subconscious. We don't even know that it's there, but it's always kind of in the way we think, the way we feel, the way we walk around. And sitting down to meditate, sometimes we discover that we have attitudes we carry with us which are not healthy for us, which are not pleasant, not enjoyable. And to the degree to which it's possible, we do two things. In mindfulness practice, we allow it to be there in order to know it well.

With the idea that as we really get to know it well, the knowing, the mindfulness itself, is another way of being. It's not caught in it. We have a mind with aversion. We have a mind with anxiety. We have a mind with desire and inadequacy. We don't define ourselves. We don't allow it to define all of who we are. We realize it's a visitor in a sense.

But when we do \*mettā\* meditation, then what we're looking for is to shift our attitude also. To shift our attitude to one that offers a positive regard to our experience, to the world, to ourselves. Then the attitude, this positive attitude, then is something that goes in all directions. Some people find it easier to cultivate with oneself, some people with other people, some people more generally without having even an object, just feeling of goodwill. So this consciously being able to shift the attitude is an important part of this.

And the reference point that might be helpful is you might think of some place in your life where you go, where you go into that context, you happily or easily or naturally shift the attitude in which you're there. You're more careful, more quiet, more attentive, like going into a library where everyone's quiet perhaps. And so you want to kind of consciously see what we can do in an easy, simple way. Shift the attitude to one of goodwill, of kindness, of care, gentleness. Right? And then is to see what we can do to bring forth our natural capacity for goodwill, even if just a little bit.

And to see where and how is the focal point for that goodwill. For some people, it's the words they say, may you be happy, may you be safe, may you be peaceful and free. Okay. That somehow something about the way they say those words, a little bit like a mantra, just they say it in a loving way, they say it in a kind way, and somehow their staying with that, those

words, somehow suffuses and cultivates that feeling of goodwill. Some people, the touchstone for it or the steering wheel for it that we hold on to is the general feeling. For some people, that general feeling has a sense of pleasure.

There's a kind of pleasantness. Some people might call it a kind of delight or smile, but a pleasure of goodwill. And for some people, the touchstone, where we stay, keep our focus, the central attention, is the breathing itself. The breathing itself begins feeling like it's completely part of goodwill. It's integral to it. And so we stay with the breathing, feeling the goodwill.

So there's words, there's attitudes, there's feelings, there is pleasures. There's something that we kind of can gather ourselves with or stay close to. And just kind of, and with the breathing, kind of breathe through it, breathe with it, kind of stay, stay. Here's where we dip in. Here's where we dip into the wonderful pool of water, the water of \*mettā\*. Here's where we touch in.

Here, here. Stay, stay. And of course, the mind will wander off. Of course, there'll come up distractions. And when we're doing \*mettā\* meditation, it's important to be able to relate to those distractions in kind ways, in friendly ways, and to not make it re-evoking the aversion to disappointment, the feeling I can't do it. And then have the kind way, say no thank you, don't need to do that, not now, thank you.

And then, without any aversion, maybe with a delight, that the very turning back into doing the \*mettā\* meditation is an act of \*mettā\*, an act of kindness. Dipping in, dipping in. And as the distractions become quieter, as they don't get fed and reinforced, then there's more energy, more attention, more fullness can go into just doing the \*mettā\* meditation, staying with it, staying with it. And with time, the feelings, the pleasures, the sensations, the experience, the whole experience of it becomes stronger and fuller. And we're able to get more and more immersed in it. We can, more with every breath, we can allow ourselves to become immersed, allow ourselves to dip into that bath, to feel it and be in it.

So I'm trying to put together, put down some of the foundational aspects that's needed for doing \*mettā\*. And some of you may be this is relatively new. And those of you who want to do more of this, I'd encourage you to practice another sitting each day where you're just left alone to do this on your own. Twenty minutes, thirty minutes, just kind of following up with the instructions here. And I realize very much how much that I'm instructing and teaching at this time.

And some people prefer much more silence. Probably I would too. But this is a trade-off, and

I'm hoping that with this foundation of putting it down and explaining it well, that some of you, you'll begin to kind of get a real sense of this, make it your own. And once this kind of foundation is put down, and next week, we'll continue this, the \*mettā-samādhī\* next week, but then we'll have more time to just practice it quietly as a kind of a culmination of what I'm teaching so far. So thank you very much, and I look forward to continuing tomorrow and next week, and may it be that you are coming to a greater and greater appreciation of your own capacity for goodwill. That it nourishes you, supports you, and is beneficial for the world you live in, people you know. Thank you.