

Dharmette: Love (13) Metta Samadhi 13

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Hello and welcome to this continued series on love. And currently we're doing *samādhi of mettā*, the meditation on kindness, goodwill, that can grow to be a universal goodwill that leaves no one out of our goodwill. Okay. But in doing so, also dissolves all the resistance, all the holding back, all the ways that we say no to giving our goodwill to some people. People that have hurt us, people who we are troubled by, people that we disagree with. It's not good for us as individuals to hold back our goodwill, to limit it.

And to learn this universal care, universal kindness, is a way to heal ourselves because we are one of those people who receive that universal care. And so part of the value of this practice of love, of goodwill, is to begin touching the places inside of ourselves which are difficult for us, challenging. Yeah. The places where we are tight or resisting or tense, contracted, bracing ourselves. The places where we're anxious. Places where we have resentment and anger.

Places we have hurt. And of course we have these things. We're all human. And so it isn't that we're wrong to have these things, but we can also meet it. We can hold it with care, with kindness and love, and allow it to dissolve, allow it to settle, allow it to not interfere with our wonderful capacity for love, for kindness. Some people have a negativity bias almost or some way in which we're pulled into the black hole of our suffering, pulled into the orbit of our preoccupations with our hurts or our angers or our desires and greeds and our anxiety.

And it's quite something to learn not to fall into that, not to prioritize that without diminishing it or pushing it away, but to be able to turn around and hold it with kindness. To hold it with care, just like you might hold a small child that's been hurt and is afraid, and maybe just gently hold the child as the child cries, and then slowly the child relaxes, and is ready for you to give it a cookie, and milk, and it starts feeling better. There's all kinds of ways which we want to include all of who we are in the practice of goodwill and the practices of mindfulness,

or to hold those two together. So one of the ways to do that is certainly to do loving-kindness towards oneself. But another way is that somehow is an adaptation of something that some of us have learned from Tibetan Buddhism, which is *tonglen* practice.

And the way that's done, as I understand it, you breathe in the suffering of others and breathe out compassion. And it's a powerful practice, but that's for later. For now, to borrow from that idea is to breathe in the goodness of others. Breathe in ways others inspire you or move you. Breathe in their love, their goodwill. Breathe that into us.

And if that seems a little bit strange, the idea of breathing in that, it's as you breathe, to breathe and feel what resonates with them, what's moved by them, what responds to them in ourselves. If they have a person of integrity and you appreciate it, something in you knows and recognizes the integrity. If they have love and you recognize it, then something inside of you is touched by that or kind of resonates with that. And so to feel that resonance, to feel what is touched and what is moved, and as you breathe in, let that spread through your body, let that grow and expand. Right? So either breathe in theirs, some people that imagination can really kind of works.

And some people it's more that it's resonating, it's touching something. It's awakening, something like that in us, and let that grow within you. And as it grows or as you take it in, have it touch. Imagine you're breathing through or touching or holding those places inside of you which are difficult. And it could be very difficult. It could be just maybe mostly you're pretty peaceful in meditation.

But there is some place of just a little kernel of tension or pressure that's not quite, you know, fully relaxed. So the whole range, hold it with care, hold it with love, hold it as if you're letting it rest in soft palms of your hand. And... And not to be sentimental, not to be kind of dismissive of the difficulties of life and how serious our suffering might be, but rather to do this very important, very serious work, very beneficial work of not limiting ourselves, not limiting our goodwill by our resentments, by our hurts, by our fears, by our desires. And the idea that we can have an unlimited goodwill, a goodwill that is not limited by any of the many ways inside of us that we hold ourselves in check, that we resist. We say, not that, I can't do that.

And if we have that idea that we can't do that, we're limited, that's what we're talking about here. It's okay. But touch that with your goodwill. Hold that with love. Breathe into that. Let it spread as you exhale into those places.

And so for some people, it could be, it's a lot easier to do this care, this love for these difficult parts of ourselves, if we feel like we're kind of receiving and breathing in the goodwill of others

so that we inspire us, people who are easy. And to breathe in and let it touch you. For other people, it just simply might be the smile that you have inside when you think of someone that inspires you, that has a lot of good. And that smile, that delight, that joy, however mild, that's what, when you breathe with that, you breathe into your own smile. And let that spread and say, oh, me too, this too. Let me hold this with this kind of care.

Let me move to a universal goodwill by holding and touching the places where that universal goodwill is limited. So kind of turning it to where, you know, that place where love is not easy, and not to make it go away and not to, you know, fight with it. But just that's probably something that needs to be held carefully and lovingly. So the ability to care for it kindly, to meet with kindness, meet with care, meet with a kind of softness and well-wishing... that which is difficult inside of you. And this is where it can be very useful to stay with the rhythm of breathing.

Somehow the movement of breath, an easy breath, just gently breathing through something or breathing with it or breathing at it from a distance, that which is difficult inside. The breathing, the rhythm of breathing is like a massage that hopefully can keep you from getting stuck or getting contracted or freezing around what's going on, or keeps you from succumbing to the story mind, the thinking about it, and the predictions, and the meanings that we have around it. That adds to how difficult it is. This is now stepping out of those stories and holding everything with goodwill, everything with kindness, hopefully with the inspiration that a universal goodwill is possible. Where our heart can hold everything in it, nothing left out. And that's the direction we're going.

And for today, doing that for what's difficult in you. So as you go through this next day, maybe you can consider ways in which your goodwill, your love, your kindness, your respect of others is in fact limited and independent of whether you think they deserve goodwill, they deserve your kindness. Recognize how that limiting your capacity for love, how you're actually less full of love, less full of goodwill, that your heart is actually contracted or limited by that. And so in a certain kind of way, you're limiting yourself, maybe even harming yourself, by not having this universal love. And... And one of the ways that maybe it makes it a little bit easier to accept the idea that having a universal love for all beings, universal goodwill, is acceptable, is okay, is whoever it is that's challenging for you, they don't have to know it.

It doesn't have to be translated to action, and they don't have to know about it. It's just for your own sake that you're learning not to hold yourself in check in any kind of way. The natural radiance of the heart can begin to flow out into the world. So, thank you. And I hope that during this day you begin exploring how you hold your love in check and maybe look for

more opportunities to let it your goodwill to be on the forefront of how you meet this world.
May all beings be happy.

Thank you.