

Dharmette: Love (42) Naturally Arising

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So hello and welcome. And in this series about love, now there's been some 40, some talks about love and exploration of it. And today I'd like to emphasize that it's possible to have love without it being something we do. That... There's a profound aspect of Buddhist spirituality that sometimes is referred to as doing, being rather than doing, and that it's a way of allowing, making room for something profound within us, something deep within us, to be expressed, to arise, to be present, to flow, that we can't easily appropriate as mine... or as me, but it's not separate from oneself. It's coming from deep within. But it's not part of the control tower.

It's not part of the mind that reacts to things, that makes things up, that constructs our reality, constructs our idea of self, that is making plans, that is thinking about the future a lot and creating a future, imaginary future, thinking about the past, remaking the past into a different past than it was. The reactive mind, the constructive mind, the discursive mind, is where many people live much of the time navigating, negotiating the world through the stories that the discursive mind can make, the beliefs it can make. And it's not that we have to stop doing that, but... It's powerful to stop feeding it, to begin relaxing deeply, to settle deeply and to allow something which I kind of think of as shy or quiet and easily drowned out, something deep within to be able to be felt and known, something that is a deep form of expression rather than a deep form of creation or attainment or making. And this kind of, with this approach, a lot of the practice is about getting out of the way. And it might take years of practice to learn how to settle down, to learn how to get steady, steady oneself, learn how to let go of enough of the hindrances, enough of our preoccupations, to begin really cruising or centered here in the present moment.

And then something can begin to open. We can kind of make space, and it feels like we are being practiced, that something is doing us, rather than we're doing the doing. Something

deep within. And there's a whole collection of inner emotions, attitudes, motivations, which really feel like they belong to the inner life that kind of suffuses us or spreads, rather than the life that is thinking and doing and imagining and visualizing. And so I use the example of faith or confidence, that there can be a strong sense of confidence that has not been something that we talked ourselves into, but rather we do something long enough, and our muscles begin to feel as kind of confidence, a kind of ease, a kind of energy, a kind of dedication to, yes, to this, yes, I can do this. And the confidence that kind of lives in us rather than thought out by us.

And there can be a calm, that also seems to exist within us as who we are. And certainly we can help make ourselves calm, but when the calm is there, it just flows. It's just part of who we are that's more suffused in general. And one of the great questions is, what's the sensations of calm? And where are they in your body? To really get close to those and allow it to spread and grow through us.

Calm, peace. There can be joy. And certainly we can do something to get pleasure, but to have deep joy or deep happiness, it might be the result of certain things happening. But we can't make this inner life flow and glow with happiness or joy. And to discover that in meditation there's a joy that is not because of any reasons in the world, nothing in the world has changed. But it's because of some deep sense of harmony and immersion and alignment with what's deep inside.

Somehow it brings a sense of joy or delight or happiness just to be alive, just to be breathing. And that also seems to be flowing from deep inside. And so one of the things that can emerge from deep within is love. Love. And it's more a matter of getting out of the way of love than making ourselves loving, make ourselves love. It's more not to mess it up, not to cover it over with anger or hostility or not to get caught up in fantasies and complicated stories, not to get caught in desire, to have too much desire for what you love, prevents the love to really flow.

To confuse desire with love, a strong desire for pleasure or something delightful is to not really allow the love to kind of be here without having a need, without having something that has to stimulate it or prove it or feed it from outside. And so this idea of sitting quietly and getting out of the way and learning how to sense and feel the subtle places at first of where good will lives. And then to begin allowing it to radiate, allowing it to kind of grow, allowing it to flow and to glow, allowing it to kind of spread maybe with every breath, making it a little bit larger, fuller, allowing it to making room, more and more room in the body, in the heart, Yes. And this is where immersing ourselves in it, gathering ourselves into that, around that, you

know, wonderful, like everything's, the whole family, everyone gathers in the kitchen and it's around a meal table, there's maybe sometimes happily being together and talking. And so everything is gathering around this warm place of love and supporting it.

And so that becomes the be-all and end-all of what we are for a period of time in meditation. And so to spread and grow by allowing what's flowing within, what's being born within, what's arising within. And so the kind of love that is not a doing is an undoing of what gets in the way of it. That is a... a deep allowing of something that's profoundly wholesome and good. And to know what that wholesomeness is, to know the goodness of this, and to be able to recognize it, and stay close to it and allow for it to grow, is the practice of *mettā*, is the practice of goodwill in Buddhism.

And you see that that kind of allowing, making room for an opening to it, is then closely connected to freedom. We're freeing ourselves from the things that cover it over or get in the way of it. Just keep opening and opening, freeing and freeing. And so as the love gets stronger, freedom grows. As freedom grows, there's more room for the love to grow. And this complementarity or this partnership... between freedom, inner freedom of the heart and love is one of the great joys and pleasures of the *Dharma*, of an inner life.

And to start getting a sense of how these work together then supports us to just begin appreciating this movement of supporting, allowing, opening, releasing for this freedom and this love to kind of just be more and more present. And then the remarkable thing that can happen, a special time comes when the open heart, the freedom of heart, the goodness, the warmth of a good loving heart, becomes a powerful reference point for how we're going to live our life, where we're not going to live a life that diminishes that. We're not going to give it up or sacrifice it, that open-heartedness, that freedom or that love, for anything, but rather to find how to live from that place, rather to take care of ourselves, protect ourselves, do what needs to be done to have a good life from that place, rather than falling back into fear, falling back into greed, falling back into the scheming and planning and mind, that falling back into conceit. So to discover what wants to be born, what is rising in terms of love in here and staying close to that. That's one of the great possibilities in learning *mettā* meditation, love meditation in Buddhism.

So you might now reflect on what I just said. And more than reflect, spend time today in different settings, especially when you're relaxed and not a lot is going on. You can just, sometimes you can just stand quietly for a few moments, sit quietly for a few moments. Maybe you're driving someplace and when you arrive where you're going to go, you don't have to race out of the car. Maybe the engine's off and you can spend maybe even just a minute sit-

ting there and feeling. What is it that wants, in terms of love, kindness, what wants to arise within you?

Is there any of it in you? Is it being born? Is it present? Is it naturally there in some way? And maybe you're annoyed with something, and so the love and the annoyance can both live there. But you don't have to prioritize the annoyance, so you miss out on the love.

See what's there in terms of love. See if it's there more often. Give yourself times through the day to check in. And then we'll continue tomorrow. Thank you.