

Dharmette: Love (43) Clarity of Metta

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So hello and welcome to this series on love, *mettā*.

I want to start today with a metaphor, a little story. There was once a large window that was installed in someone's home, and it came from the factory very clean and clear, no smudges, nothing. And it was installed in some people's living room, a large window. And the people who lived in the house were delighted to have this big, clean window. And they would come to look through the window at the landscaper outside their home. But the window itself didn't understand.

The window thought that the people were coming to look at it. And so the window thought, well, I have nothing to show for myself. I have nothing that is interesting, nothing that's valuable here. And the window got depressed and was quite sad and quite concerned. And all kinds of strange thoughts came up about how it was, you know, not a really good window. It was a bad window.

It was maybe guilty of some crime that they didn't know what it was. And it was a sad time for this window to have people look at it and have nothing to show. And so then it was a big rainstorm and a dusty day, and the rain and the dust somehow ended up kind of drying up eventually and lots of spots on the window. And when people came to look through the window, they didn't really see the spots, but the window started to feel, oh, I have something to show for myself now. I have these little spots, dust and dried water, and I'm beginning to be something important.

A garden snail walked across somehow the window and left a track of slime, and the window was like, oh, look at this, there's much more here. It's so straight, the slimes of slime. And then there was a local fire, and lots of soot ended up in the window, and birds somehow, bird poop would fall on it. And slowly, over the months and years, the window was never cleaned.

It got more and more kind of filled with all kinds of things kind of stuck to it. And it became harder and harder to see out the window.

And the living room started to get dark and, you know, a little bit small because not enough light was coming in. But the glass was quite happy. It had all these things that proved its existence, how important it was, and it could show off all the things that had accumulated over the years. And then one day, it occurred to the people that we should clean this window. And so they had it cleaned back to what it was when it was new, brand new, completely of all dust and everything.

And they came to look out the window. They had forgotten how beautiful it was to have a clear, crystal clear, clean window, and how beautiful it was to see the environment. And they exclaimed, oh, it's so wonderful. This window is perfect. It's functioned. It allows us to see how beautiful the natural world is.

And we're so glad we have this window. And the window was quite surprised to hear this. It thought its worth was all dependent on what it could show for itself on the window. But the idea that it was worthy having nothing to show for itself, that in fact its purpose, its wonderfulness was that it had nothing on it. It was completely clear. It didn't have something that was distracting or detracting from its clarity, the absence of something on it, so people could see outside.

So then the window was quite happy and happy ever after, and just loved to be just this wide, open, clear, the clarity to allow people to see right through it. And that would seem so special that people's eyes didn't stop at the window. People's eyesight went right through it, and that was its gift to the world.

So in the same way, we accumulate... We accumulate thoughts and ideas and identities and values and judgments and hurts and desires and memories and aspirations, predictions of the future. There's all these accumulations we get that then become objects of awareness, objects of mind, things we're thinking about, things we're concerned about. And in a certain way they steadily obscure the clarity of awareness. They obscure our ability to see clearly without anything on the awareness, without seeing through the lens or through these ideas, these concepts, what we're thinking about.

And, you know, it's possible to have, I've seen certain people and I had certain ideas about them and saw them through my ideas before I actually heard them talk, and was assuming all kinds of things. And my eyesight was seeing the person through the filter of these concepts, ideas, and sometimes bias that I've had. And then I would meet them and talk to them, and I

realized that my ideas of them were completely wrong. And I thought I was seeing accurately. And so there was a, my window was dirty. My window was smudged with my ideas, and I couldn't see clearly what was there.

And so what we're learning to do, both in mindfulness but also in *mettā*, is to clear the window, to clear our ability to see, to clear the ability for the heart to love, so that love doesn't have any smudges on it, doesn't have any dust on it, doesn't have any filters. And now it's very hard to do this if we have an object of the love, a person that we love, a thing that we love. But it's a phenomenal thing to learn how to have, that we can have this clarity of love with no object. And so kind of removing all the smudges, all the things that interfere, all the filters we have that come with having an object.

There's something wrong. It can be quite pure to have love someone. Right. But it's easier to really experience this objectless love, this spacious, open, wide radiance of love that has no smudges on it, has no object. It doesn't depend on what we're thinking about. It's not part and parcel of what we think about and what the objects of attention are not shaping it in any kind of way.

It's just there. It's a state. It doesn't have to have a reason. Right? It doesn't have to have a purpose. It's just there, the purpose is to have that clarity.

It's like the window, the purpose is to be clear. Love's purpose is to have this clarity that we see clearly what's there. And there's something about seeing clearly that in and of itself... because we feel safe, we feel settled, we feel connected to ourselves in a deep way without anything extra, any extra fear, any extra anxiety or desire or aversion. And remarkably, there can just be a deep inner tenderness, warmth, gentleness, love.

Some people don't like these kinds of... quiet words for it. It can be strong. It can be bright. It can be fill us, you know, with a sense of joy and delight. Love takes many different shapes. But sometimes it starts off the feeling of it in a tender, soft, quiet way.

And it's often when it's strong, it's because it is an object that's fueling it. But there is a way of having an all-pervasive feeling objectless love, that love just is, and allows us to rest, allows us to be reassured. It gives us a place to settle down, to realize there's an alternative to always being concerned about something, always be leaning into the world or pulling back from the world, but to just rest, to be at ease, to abide in love.

And that's the upper reaches of meditation on *mettā*. That's a *mettā* liberation of mind, liberation of heart with *mettā*, by *mettā*, is the *mettā* that has become freed of objects, freed of desires, freed of needs. It just is, and it's ready to kind of... The heart, the love is just open,

pervasive, spacious, clear, wide open. Kind of a need has no purpose, except it's kind of like a window that has no purpose, but it's invaluable for the eyes that look through it.

So love has no purpose. A love, a form of love that has no purpose. Very hard to trust. But it's invaluable for the eyes that look through it. Your eyes, how you look through them into this world that we live and share. So, the full potential of love, one of the wonderful possibilities.

And may you discover a love that has no smudges, no remnants, nothing left on it. Even wonderful things. In thinking about the story I just made up, I had one more thing that got smudged or got left imprint that got left on the window. And that was someone with thick red lipstick came over and kissed the window. And the window was so happy to have this permanent lipstick on it.

Or kids with dirty hands, little kids was touching the window and leaving their little handprint. It's so wonderful to see these little hands. Yes, wonderful. Mm-hmm. And slowly the window loses its clarity. And when love is not clear, we don't have that clarity.

It's hard for it to be available to love the next kiss, the next child, the next moment. May you discover clear love, open love, love with an out-and-object. Thank you.