

Guided Meditation: Stability and Compassion

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Good morning. Hello. Welcome.

So, continuing with our exploration, meditations on compassion, one of the key aspects of compassion is that, as *karuṇā*, as Buddhist meditation practice, and compassion in Buddhist life, is its integral connection to equanimity. Not equanimity that's aloof, but an equanimity that supports compassion from being non-reactive, compassion that becomes biased or becomes somehow caught in the suffering of the world. But to be able to stay open, receptive, and wise, and responsive in a balanced way to the suffering is supported by equanimity. And equanimity is one of the key components of a healthy, overall, balanced Buddhist practice. And so for this meditation, the emphasis will be on equanimity in relationship to compassion.

So for that purpose, part of equanimity is balance and stability. To base oneself, center oneself on balance and stability. And equanimity then grows from that. So to assume a meditation posture where we feel the weight of the body resting on some surface. So if you're sitting on the floor, against the floor and a cushion, against a chair, a bed, wherever the weight of the body touches a surface that's holding it up against the pull of gravity.

And to adjust a little bit, maybe wiggle, move around a little bit, and to really kind of feel and sense the contact of the body against that surface, and all the different points where contact is being made. And in those contact points, to relax, maybe taking a deep breath or two and settling in with the weight of the body resting against those points of contact. And as you inhale, to have some sense of the awareness of the body rises up through the body, out of those contact points. Almost as if there's a structural support moving up your body to hold the weight that's above each place. If you're sitting upright, the lower torso supports the upper torso. The lower spine supports the upper spine.

The upper torso, the upper spine supports the head. And with the rhythm of breathing in and breathing out, breathing out, settling the weight of the body, resting, stabilizing, and on the inhale, feeling that the lower parts of the body are there to rise up and support what's above. Perhaps taking a few longer breaths, fuller breaths, so there can be a deeper relaxation in the body. And each relaxation is a movement towards stability, steadiness, a gathering together of the full body as a single unit of stability and steadiness.

And if the thinking mind has tension in it, pressure in it, also in the exhale, relax that tension. Yes, relax the tightness or constriction, as if the thinking mind then can also settle, stabilize, settle back into the support of the body. And in what way does mindfulness, awareness, arise together with that stability, steadiness of body, mind, whatever degree of stillness there is within? What's the quality of awareness? What's the quality of awareness emanating from that stillness, that stability, that might be different than the kind of mindfulness that originates in the thinking mind.

And staying close to some stability, steadiness, balance, as we continue now doing the mindfulness, mindfulness of breathing, and see if that steadiness, stability, can lessen the reactivity of the state, lessen reactive and distracting ways in which the mind wanders off. The body tenses up. Is there some way you can feel at home in inner subtleness, steadiness, stability that you touch in with, touch into with every breath, with every breath touching into some inner stability, balance, and touch into some place where there is some discomfort, physical or emotional? Maybe some place within your life where there's some suffering that's not too great.

And as if the most caring and compassionate way to be with the discomfort, to be with the suffering, is to know it and feel it, to touch into it in a balanced, steady way, non-reactive way. As you breathe, touch into an inner stability and then touch into, feel and know the discomfort, the suffering, to see how non-reactive you can be. While at the same time, having a simple compassion, simple care and warmth of recognizing, accompanying the suffering, with inner stability, whatever degree of steadiness or balance you feel within, touching into it with each breath, maybe in the exhale, maybe the inhale, and then also in that cycle of breathing, maybe one shading into the other, overlapping with the other.

Touching into suffering, suffering of those you know, your own suffering, suffering of the world, and hold it with a warm-hearted care, as if witnessing and being present and knowing is good medicine. Provisionally, just having that view that just to be present is enough, present in a balanced, stable way, not continuously, but in a rhythm of breathing, touching into the suffering, and staying balanced as you do.

And as we come to the end of this sitting, to turn your attention outward into the world, maybe some particular area of concern where there is suffering in your life, people you know, or the world more widely, and with a rhythm of breathing. Touching into a stability, a steadiness in your body, your heart, your mind, and in that rhythm of breathing, gazing upon the world with care, compassion, as if the medicine of the world at this moment is simply to know it, know the suffering, with warmth, with love, with a genuine care, compassion, that remains balanced and stable. In which fear, anxiety, despair, anger is left alone for now, so that the compassion shares in a stability, warmth, equanimity, so the compassion can be fuller, uncompromised, an undiluted medicine for the world.

A compassion that somehow, it can be expressed or described as a wish for the suffering to not be there. May the suffering of others be alleviated. May the suffering of others be replaced with peace and safety. May the suffering of others be replaced with goodwill and love and care. May the suffering of others be replaced with freedom from suffering. May all beings be free.

May all beings feel at home safely in their own hearts and minds. And may we all care for each other. May it be the highest value that our good hearts cares for all beings equally with equanimity. Thank you.