

Dharmette: Love (58) Mudita and Opening with "Yes"

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So this week the topic is *appreciative joy*. And I'm kind of laying down the foundation for it, and we'll practice more directly with it soon. But *appreciative joy* is the ability, it's kind of a double happiness, or triple happiness. It's the happiness, success that others have, and it's our happiness in relationship to that, being delighted by that, being heartened by it, and then wishing them more, wishing it to remain, wishing happy, and saying yes, may it continue. Or may they feel the happiness, may they feel the contentment, may they remember their goodness, what they've done that's so good.

And so this kind of way of kind of building, compounding things that are good in the world, to recognize it in others, and there's many things to recognize in others, their happiness, their success when things are going well for them. It's nice to acknowledge it in a simple way, not lingering on it, but just kind of showing our appreciation or delight, offering our congratulations. But also it's possible to appreciate people's innate goodness or their goodness, their sincerity. People have good qualities. Most people have mixed qualities, good and bad in a sense. But to say yes to the good qualities, take time to see them and recognize them, not to linger with what we don't like, not to linger on what we're complaining about or that we don't like.

Certainly we can have things we don't like. But to linger there, to stay stuck on that, maybe is not so useful for you. But to recognize, oh, that person is behaving in unfortunate ways, and I can see more, there's more to that person than that behavior. And I can appreciate that. Maybe I can speak to that. Maybe I can draw that out more.

So one of the reasons why *appreciative joy* is considered sometimes the hardest of the four divine abodes, or *brahmavihāras*, is because one reason is envy. People have envy or jealousy. They want to have what the other person has. They wish they could have it, and they kind of

a little bit resent even maybe what the other person has, the goodness the other person has, or they get caught up in this desire, that's what I want, I should be having that, how do I get that? And so we get caught up in this complex of ways in which we get attached that prevent us from really stepping in and saying yes, in a kind of selfless way.

And that's another form of happiness, of *appreciative joy*, that we can just put ourselves in a certain way aside, and so to delightfully have it not about us, not about me, but just clearly yes, this is wonderful, this happening in this person. And certainly congratulating others and appreciating their goodness, thanking them perhaps free of any kind of attachment to self or trying to prove ourselves or hold on to self. You know, you don't want to say thank you and say thank you but I want more. Thank you and, you know, I deserve to have a better time here or something. Just let go and yes, thank you.

And so to become aware of envy, the ways we close down, the way we limit ourselves, limit our capacity for happiness, to open up wider, to become freer in that process. And so part of the joy of *appreciative joy* is how it actually does free us in a joyful way and a delightful way. And it's a kind of wonderful yes, yes to what's happening here with this person. Yes, this person just graduated from high school and is happy. Yes, I'll be happy with them. Yes, this person just got a raise and they're very happy.

Yes, let's be happy. Let's cheer to them. Yes, this person finished their crossword puzzle. Yes, they finished their crossword puzzle. And so rather than saying well how could they waste their time doing a crossword puzzle or something, or I wish I could do it, or I have a hard time with crossword puzzles, but just yes, this is great, you're happy so I'll be happy. It's empathic happiness, it's sympathetic with other people. Sharing what they're doing, participating in their goodness and well-being.

And when that's not possible because of the envy, the jealousy, maybe even the resentment, maybe even the anger that gets in the way, or the selfishness or the conceit, or it's about me and I'm left out, there is the art of saying yes to that. Not going along with it, not participating in kind of the unwholesome states that we're caught in, but opening up, yes, this is my way of being a human being right now. I'm not going to be critical. I don't have to add arrows to my heart. Yes, I have envy. And yes, maybe you become bigger than your envy, bigger than your jealousy, bigger than your resentment.

And this idea that through awareness, through stepping forward, through saying yes and expanding yourself, that you become big. Part of what happens when we get attached, when we cling, when we resist, when we protect ourselves, we actually get smaller. And the smaller we are, the less capacity we have to manage things and have space to hold things. The yes

is meant to give us greater capacity not only to be with happiness but also to be with the opposites.

So I would encourage you to try it out, both to be with yes. Sprinkle it through the day. Find it, but yes to just being open, being present. And especially look for good things in people. Look at their beauty, look at their good qualities, look at their happiness and joy. And step towards it.

Maybe not that they notice you're stepping towards them, but you're kind of yes. No one has to know you're doing this. You don't have to open your arms. But in your heart you're yes, this is good. I'm happy. Look at that. The store clerk, checkout clerk, complimented someone on something they bought and the customer smiled.

Well, yes. How often do we see people smile in the store? Wow, that was a big smile. What a great thing. Yes. So the art of just looking forward to appreciate what delight in. And it can be overdone. But for today, don't worry about that.

See if you can go through the day with a greater sense of yes, looking for what you can appreciate and delight in, in the goodness, the success, the happiness of others. So thank you. And doing this exercise during the day will prepare you more for dipping into the *samādhi* of *appreciative joy*. Thank you.