

Guided Meditation: Appreciative Joy for Easy Person

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Hello and welcome.

And this week, the theme of these morning meditations is *muditā samādhi*, being immersed in the meditation on appreciative joy. And my hope is that last week's meditations and teachings have prepared the ground to really immerse oneself, dip deeply into this capacity we have for joy, in appreciating the joy, the success, the happiness of others, and to really make it, for a brief time, a real focal point, a real something that we give ourselves kind of over to fully, to receive the benefits of that.

And last week's meditations were touching into contentment, appreciation, gratitude, the ability to say yes to joy, to happiness, to the goodness in this world. And then to appreciate how joy begets joy, how the joy of appreciative joy is the joy, and there's a joy of someone else. There's our joy in experiencing it. And then there's a third kind of joy, which is the joy of kind of opening to it and appreciating it and almost, you can think of it almost as a gift to the person, to others. And so it's just a joy that keeps growing.

And so today we'll do specifically the meditation that's on specifically appreciative joy. And we'll start with a category of a person for whom it's easy to have appreciative joy. And so someone whose happiness is uncomplicated for you, their success, their good fortune, someone for whom you can maybe have an empathic or a sympathetic or a resonance with them for their goodness, their well-being, their fullness, their happiness, their joy, and for whom it's an uncomplicated resonance. You just are delighted by it. You're satisfied by it.

And so to assume a meditation posture, when doing *Brahma-vihāra* practice, sometimes the emphasis is on being comfortable in the posture. And sometimes it's maybe even useful to lean into the comfort of meditation posture, maybe more than the alertness. And then to gently close the eyes or lower the gaze.

And take a few minutes to let your attention roam around your body, touching into the various parts of your body, those that are comfortable, pleasant, those that are not, but letting the attention float around so it doesn't linger anywhere, doesn't react, or doesn't do anything with what it touches into, just touches in briefly and moves on. A kind of generous attention that acknowledges, allows, and then moves on to be with more of who you are.

And then gently taking some fuller breaths that fill the rib cage, lift the shoulders, perhaps. Spread, it opens up the back rib cage ever so slightly. And then as you exhale, to relax all that. When you come to the end of the exhale, maybe relaxing, letting go a little bit more. So there's a second phase of the exhale that briefly settles you deep into your belly, letting your breathing return to normal.

And continue for some breaths to feel the expansion, the filling of the inhale, and the relaxing, letting go of the body on the exhale, both the inhales and the exhales grounding in your body. And then becoming aware of any tension or pressure, tightness associated with your thinking, a physical tension that I call the thinking muscle. Feel it on the inhale. Just allow it to be there on the inhale. And on the exhale, let it relax, soften as you relax the thinking muscle on the exhale.

As you come to the end of the exhale, settle more fully into your body so that whatever thinking is left is clearly part of the wholeness, the fullness of the whole, your whole body, mind. Thinking is not prioritized. It's a piece of the whole that can relax.

And now bring to mind some person that you know, directly or indirectly, personally or from a distance, for whom it's easy for you to appreciate, easy for you to be delighted, to feel it's kind of, in your way, a simple joy, that they're happy, have good fortune, that they have such goodness or kindness. If you visualize well, you might have visualized the person with a happy face, happy eyes, or you might remember a time, a situation, where you most clearly experienced this person's joy, happiness, good fortune in a way that relaxed something in you, where you appreciate the person and their qualities. Maybe even there's a gratitude that we live in a world where this kind of goodness is present.

And rather than doubting or questioning or hesitating, as you exhale or inhale, whichever is best for you, say yes to this joy, the joy of this person, and maybe your joy of knowing it. And gently, quietly, the fullness of this appreciative joy might fill out even more.

And quietly, gently, the soft, quiet mind, give expression to a deep wish: May your happiness continue. May your good fortune and success continue. And like maybe choosing one of those sentences, may your happiness continue. And let it be like dropping a pebble into

the surface of a calm lake and a beautiful ripple spreads out, like the lake says yes to the pebble.

May your happiness continue, dropping it into your heart, your body, to feel the body's expression of joy and delight, appreciation, gratitude. Maybe saying your sentence with the exhale, giving yourself over, immersing yourself for these few minutes in this practice of appreciative joy, as if it's the only thing you need to do for the next minutes.

Staying close to this joy. Whatever way you can get close, feeling the joy of others, your own joy, their joy, the joy of wishing that it continues for them so that the pleasure of the joy keeps welcoming your attention here. Stay here. Feel this. Enter into this joy with your whole being.

And for another minute, to not doubt joy, not doubt that it's all right to give yourself fully into whatever joy you feel in the joy of others, the delight, the appreciation, the gratitude, the yes, that for a minute you don't need to give heed to fear or envy, other topics.

And then as we come to the end of this meditation, to see if you can expand that appreciation, gratitude, joy out into the world, not worrying if you have to have a reason for it. Simply it's good for you to radiate, to open, to soften into a broad appreciative joy where you wish for everyone who has joy, who has success, who has well-being: May it continue. May I share it so that it has a better chance to continue. May my appreciation contribute to you having more room, all of you, more room for your own joy, your own delight and happiness.

May all happinesses everywhere continue. May all happiness be allowed to be there safely and peacefully. May always people are happy, not be threatened, taken away. May clean, good happiness be free to live, fill everyone's heart. May this world know more happiness and joy. Thank you.