

## Guided Meditation: Mudita Samadhi 5

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So in continuing with appreciative joy and doing it in a *muditā samādhi*, entering into deeper immersion or giving yourself over fully to this practice without distractions, it helps to have a focus of *samādhi* that is uncomplicated, okay, in terms of emotionally uncomplicated. And so while the classic way of practicing, or traditional way of practicing over a long period of time, is to eventually start including what's called the enemy, in modern English we often say the difficult person. And that's invaluable practice to do. But to continue this week's emphasis on *samādhi*, we're going to go on to the next level, which maybe can be more inspiring and more engaging. And that is appreciative joy for all beings. So radiating it in 360 degrees all around.

But what's particularly special about this, all beings, is that you are included. Each of us is part of all beings. So when we're all doing all beings, we're all doing it for each other, but also we're doing it for ourselves. And the fascinating part of Buddhist spirituality is that there's not a sharp line between self and others. And there's an idea that if we are benefiting ourselves in a healthy spiritual way, that's going to benefit others. If we're benefiting others in a healthy spiritual way, that's going to benefit ourselves. And so there's mutuality, there's a feedback loop.

And so, as we do, and for some people, it's nice to begin with oneself and have it radiate outwards. For others, it's nice to do for all beings and then begin including oneself in that. And so eventually, it's all beings and oneself, oneself and all beings. And part of the advantage of having this appreciative joy for oneself, wanting our own well-being, recognizing it where it's there, recognizing what's going well in our life, what we're capable of, what benefits we have, what we're grateful for, and really appreciating that and letting the joy of that, letting the pleasure of that kind of really touch us deeply, is that as we do that, we'll understand

better and have a better capacity to have an empathy, a resonance with the goodness of others, what's going well for others, and have more abundance of appreciative joy to share with them, wishing them well, and vice versa.

And so, to assume a meditation posture, and closing the eyes, and perhaps beginning with oneself, and appreciating what is going well for you. What are you grateful for? What are you glad that's happening that you overlook? It could be something as simple as the weather or that you have running water, flush toilets. I mean, we take these things for granted, many people in our society. But, you know, in my grandparents' age, my mother's age when she was growing up, there were no flush toilets, yes, and no showers. And the relative ease of finding food for many of us, it's phenomenal that we don't have to go scraping.

I hear stories from, again, from my parents' youth of people starving and trying to eat birch bark. So to appreciate what is going well, what can bring you some joy and delight and maybe some satisfaction in your life. Maybe it's as simple as the opportunity to sit and meditate right now, the opportunity to have a more heightened sensitivity to your own body than you do being busy in life, distracted, and with that sensitivity, maybe also to your heart. Everyone has somewhere inside a good heart, a good center, and to appreciate that. Or if you feel like you don't have to in touch with it, borrow my confidence that you have it.

And taking a few deeper breaths to feel the real rhythm of the body expanding, contracting as you exhale, almost like listening to the rhythm of music or poetry. Take these deeper breaths with a nice, calm, relaxed rhythm, not too deep, not too full, relaxing on the exhale. On the inhale, connecting to what you appreciate, value, treasure, that's going well for you. Maybe what's going well but you take for granted. Maybe it's going well because it's very special and unusual. As you breathe in, feel the warmth, the delight, the gladness from that. As you exhale in this rhythm of breathing, poetic rhythm, relaxing into that joy, that pleasure.

Letting your breathing return to normal, and continue with this, if it makes sense for you, poetic rhythm of breathing in and out. Maybe ever so slightly, the exhale is longer than usual, extended in a relaxed way, so you can relax into the pleasures, the joys of appreciative joy, for what's going well for you. An extending exhale, in which you let your discursive mind become quiet, so there's more space and awareness to feel, sense the joy. And then with yourself as a reference, extend your care out into the world to all beings, all humans, that all humans, may they experience gratitude, appreciation. May they find joy, delight in the small gifts of life that come their way with what's going well, what's working. May all beings' capacity for joy, success, happiness, may it visit them, may it abide in them. May it continue in them like it is in you.

And you might use the phrase, may the good in people's lives continue and grow. May the good in all our lives continue and grow. And as we continue settling into just this message, just this aspiration and the pleasure of it, the openness of it, the generosity of it, all beings, including yourself, so that your own joy grows together with that of others, together with your aspiration for others. May what's good in all people's lives continue and grow. And if it's easier to get absorbed in this topic, maybe saying a single word is all you need. The word appreciation, gratitude, or even joy, knowing it's the joy of all that's going well and the joy that comes from generous, generously wishing more for people. May their success continue for all of us.

And staying focused on appreciative joy is easier when we know that all the suffering of the world begins to be healed, begins to diminish, when we also know that there is joy in the world, appreciation and gratitude. To not have the suffering of the world be the reason for losing touch with a very human capacity for the opposite of suffering, for happiness, love, gratitude, care, and compassion. To appreciate all this good that is also in the human heart, it needs to be watered and recognized and have its time to support us in the times of trouble. And to wish for yourself and for all beings, may they taste, may they feel and sense, may they awaken their capacity for joy and gratitude, inner health, the spiritual health. May their hearts not only smile but sing with being alive so we can meet joy with resilience, meet suffering without creating more suffering, meet suffering and make room for something really good to arise out of it, our deep appreciation, respect, and love for all beings.

May we aspire to have such love. May we remember we can love with appreciative joy. May all beings be happy. May all beings be safe. May all beings be peaceful. May all beings be free. Thank you.