

Guided Meditation: Vast Love

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Hello everyone, welcome. And today I would like to call upon these almost 70 guided meditations and talks on love that we've been doing here since the beginning of January. Some of you have been along for many of them, most of them, all of them. They're meant to be a continuity between them, a building. And now we come to the form of love known as equanimity, a form of equanimity that is love. It's called *upekkhā brahmavihāra*, the divine abode of equanimity.

But to make the most sense of this, and to really appreciate it deeply, it helps to call upon all that we've done so far, and the tapping into *samādhi*. Some of you have been along here for a couple of years, and last year's long series was on *samādhi*. And *samādhi*, the development of love, gives us a unique perspective on its topic of equanimity, equanimity as a form of love. So I'm going to call upon your experience in meditation, with *samādhi*, with being calm, peaceful, maybe a sense of expansive mind. Maybe it's your imagination that calls on this. So following along.

So assuming a meditation posture, quietly adjusting your posture. So the posture contains within it a feeling of alertness. It doesn't have to be dramatic. But there is some feeling of alertness in the torso, in the spine, in the positioning of the neck, and how the head sits on the neck. And that your hands and arms too are positioned in such a way that they provide some stability, and also open you up.

If your hands are face down on your thighs, stability is there in the resting of the hands on the thighs. If your hands are pulled up a bit on your thighs, your elbows into your side, it might help open the chest a bit, expansiveness there. Gently closing your eyes and feeling from the inside out your body, as if you can have a global panoramic view. Sometimes I've taken the image of standing in some place that's really dark in the mountains or desert and looking up

into the vast sky all around, to be the kind of reference point for being in the middle of my body and gazing around panoramically throughout the body without getting stuck, caught in any particular place.

The body itself is a vast universe. If you were an atom in the middle of your body, this body would in fact feel like a galaxy, a vast universe, vastness. And then within this body, slowly, mindfully, as a way of connecting deeply, taking some deeper breaths, fuller breaths, as if you're filling out the whole global body with awareness. And as you exhale, to relax the body, a settling in to the center from all directions.

Often in relaxing, the focus is on maybe the shoulders, the belly, the chest. It's also possible to have the settling be in the back rib cage, in the spine. The area of your hip joint, where the sides of your thigh meet the sides of your torso. And letting your breathing return to normal.

And allow the same global awareness to take in the mind. Not the particular thoughts you have or feelings you have, but kind of the wide field of awareness of the mind in which there are as many things happening, maybe, but without focusing on anything in particular. Like here too, there's a vast universe with a global awareness that spreads out because the mind has no edges. There's no boundary between what is mind and not mind.

And maybe the awareness either saturates the whole of it, or it's a small atom gazing out into the vast space universe of the mind, feeling what's there, knowing what's there, as if it's all okay. It's just stars, stardust, moons, and galaxies. On the inhale, letting awareness expand out into the universe of the mind. And on the exhale, relaxing and settling the mind.

Not just having the mind settle in the head, but there's a way that this vast mind can settle into the torso, settle into the breathing, the movements of breathing, so that the vast body and the vast mind are not so different. And in the midst, middle of it all, there's the rhythm of breathing, the pulsing, breathing in, breathing out. Where whatever sensations of breathing there are, are occurring within this vast field of space or vast ocean of experience.

With every inhale, awareness spreads wide, not stopping with any thought, any emotion, but not denying it or rejecting it, just spreading through it and beyond it, holding it in vast space. And on the exhale, letting the thinking mind become quieter, slower, so you can appreciate that that provides more space of awareness. Where there were thoughts, now there's more attention. Nothing is rejected, and in a certain way nothing is accepted, neither accepted nor rejected. Everything is allowed to be in the vast, spacious mind as you breathe through everything, breathe beyond everything, breathe back, exhale back to a settled place, a settling

place deep within where there's a vast awareness, a vastness of space that can hold anything at all.

Any thought, any feeling, any sensation. Just keep remembering that with the exhale and inhale, do not stop with anything. Do not stop for any thoughts, any sensations, any emotions. Let the oscillation, the rhythm of breathing, expand beyond whatever's there with the inhale, holding everything peacefully, even what is not peaceful within. And on the exhale, settling to a peaceful settled place at the end of the exhale.

And in the quiet of mind, in the spaciousness of awareness, in the vast space of body and mind, maybe you can recognize equanimity and non-reactivity that allows everything just to be what it is without it being a problem, without it being a gift, without doing anything except letting each thing be itself in the wider space of the mind, the wider space of the body. Allowing the thinking mind to become quieter, letting go of thoughts in order to better be with the equanimity towards all things. Allowing all things to be themselves without a problem, without argument, without contention or holding on, without savoring anything, just letting it be.

And in the vast stillness, spaciousness, just sitting here this way, might there be some peace or some calm that has no reason to be there. It just is. Nothing needs to justify it. And to breathe whatever degree of peace or calm it is that way. It just is.

And might there be, maybe connected to that peace or calm, might there be something in the family of love, a love that has no object, a love which has no reason, that's not directed to anybody or anything at all, a love that just is. That's big enough, wide enough to hold all things. Maybe it's a soft tenderness, a gentle kindness, a radiance or a glow of love. A love which can hold all things is a love that's not dependent on anything being one way or the other. A love that's not for or against anything. A love that doesn't react, a love which is equanimous.

And for the last short time here, gently, gradually, see if you can expand your love, your peace, your vast awareness to become big enough to hold all that is difficult in this world. Starting with local, gently opening up wider and wider, keeping this love equanimous, that holds all things. There's nothing to fix, nothing to solve, nothing to identify with, no past, no future. Just now, equanimous love that holds all things peacefully, a heart that's big enough to hold the whole world.

And then as if you're in a space capsule, comfortable, wonderful, safe, far out in space, looking back at the Earth, offer your goodwill to this whole planet, everyone on it. May all beings

be happy. May all beings be safe. May all beings be peaceful. May all beings be free.

And may you periodically touch into love that is equanimous, vast, spacious, that can hold all beings in it. May all beings be happy. Thank you.