

## Guided Meditation: Love at its Simplist

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So greetings, and I feel very fortunate, as I was saying, to be here, to be able to reflect on and feel my way into this profound human capacity for love. While we might have different reference points for love, it's such a multivalent word with so many different meanings and so many different ways it appears. But one way or the other, when the mind-heart is at its simplest, when it's at the most peaceful state, and when it's least caught in desires and aversions, maybe not at all, love is at the heart, at the foundation of our being. It is phenomenal that we have this ability, that this can happen for us, and phenomenal to be in touch with it. And it's so easy to lose touch.

And to have spent these last six months now, now into the seventh month, just focusing on this topic of love in different fashions, we come to what some Buddhists will consider the most profound form of love. And what I find the most profound: equanimous love, the love of equanimity, is the degree to which it's associated with a radical simplicity, simplicity of being. When all our desires take a vacation, when all our aversions take a rest, when all our agitation and worry and anxieties have been reassured deeply, when all our physical discomfort no longer is a preoccupation, then something deep inside, something in our heart, something deep within our torso, and deep in our mind, the deep mind, can have a feeling of peace, a feeling of simplicity, a feeling of clarity, a feeling of energy. This is enough. This is wonderful.

There's a feeling of freedom, a freedom from doing, a freedom from reacting. And in that simplicity of this freedom, this non-reactivity, this depth of just being, and just being alive is enough, there can be a tenderness, a warmth, a goodness, a form of love, goodwill, care, gentleness, that doesn't need to have a reason, doesn't need to have an object. It's just the nature of this quiet, still, non-reactive place to want to sing freedom, sing love, sing care,

gentleness, warmth. It's just this nature, like the nature of a heater is to radiate heat. It's the nature of this deep place inside to radiate love outward, through oneself, for oneself, beyond oneself, without any for, without any purpose, without any even object needed. It just is.

And we have, I think, a wonderful example, that all of human life, in one way or the other, depends on the existence of our sun. It shines on us without wanting anything from us, without any for or against us, in a sense. It just radiates, and we can live. So deep inside of ourselves is our own sun, our own warmth that can just glow.

So, to assume a meditation posture and to gently close the eyes and sit here, start off by not doing much, except doing less, allowing the body, heart, and mind to become simpler. Less to do, less to accomplish, less to fix, just to be. And if what I said earlier, that there is a place of profound peace, profound love, care, gentleness within, below all the layers of reactivity, history, events, relationships we have, where would that be in you? Would it be more in the heart, wider in the chest, deeper down in the belly, somehow more in the mind, maybe deep in the mind or wide in the mind?

And wherever you think it might be, or where you want it to be, there, let that be the settling spot for your breathing. Almost as if you're breathing from there or through there, you're breathing with this place, gently touching this place as you breathe in, gently relaxing into it as you exhale. As you exhale, as if you're settling down through the layers of your life, so you experience yourself deep within, without any shoulds, a place where there's no reactivity, where issues of your life story and relationships are kind of left behind temporarily because there's a deeper place of simplicity. Simple breathing, settling through the layers, even the layers of discomfort in the body. So attention settles into a place of tenderness, kind of like settling into a refreshing pool of water.

As you exhale, immerse yourself deep into this place of radical simplicity. And gently, in a quiet voice, or maybe you say it non-verbally, have the word *love* ride on your exhale, so you touch into the deepest, quietest, simplest love that depends on nothing, that just is there within you, in the place within where there's the greatest quiet, stillness, softness. Is there anything like a gentle glow of love or *mettā*, that doesn't need an object, doesn't need a person, a love that just is? To gently breathe with it, to enter into it with your breathing, and letting the pleasure of it spread through your body, a place of quiet deep inside that doesn't need to reach out to anything, that maybe is uninclined to get activated or reactive to anything, is not susceptible to being disturbed by anything.

Coming here, feeling deeply, tenderly, a place where love is equanimous, peaceful, needing nothing, wanting nothing, and from there gazing upon the world with eyes that also don't

want anything or need anything, eyes that love, not afraid, not reactive, as if the greatest medicine is to gaze on the world from this profound, quiet place of love, gazing upon the world calmly, peacefully. Bring into mind the people of your life around you, in your communities, out across the land. As if for these few seconds, nothing is needed except the gift of simple, non-transactional love. Love that just loves for no reason even. Love that spreads and expands out through the world.

And to end this sitting, to give some dedication, some aspiration to come out of that love, with its calm, peaceful way. May all beings be happy. May all beings be safe. May all beings be peaceful. May all beings be free. And may the miracle of love have a chance to work on this world. Simple love that asks for nothing in return. Just love.

Thank you.