

Guided Meditation: Steady Connection with Love

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So hello, good morning, welcome.

And this remarkable topic for this week, a form of love that's characterized by equanimity, is often misunderstood and is often discounted, and it's often questioned whether it's appropriate to have equanimous love. Love should not be equanimous. It should care, it should be involved, it should be active somehow. That being equanimous means being detached, being uninvolved, being aloof, being distant. But that's a huge misunderstanding.

We succumb, some of us succumb often enough, with states of mind that do disconnect us from others. If there's anger, if there's hatred, if there's annoyance, if there's fear, anxiety, if there's strong desires, impatience, there's a whole slew of things that we do that involve a disconnection. And those disconnects. Equanimous love is not a disconnection. The connection of love is still there, but it's not being given up. We're not abandoning that love for these other states.

Someone else in the relationship might be angry. Some of the relationship might not, might have separated the connection, but that's not a reason for us practicing equanimous love to disconnect the way that the love is open and clear and present, that kindness is available. We do feel connected. We're present. And it's a powerful thing to know how to stay present and open and loving, even in times of challenge and difficulties, even when others are having difficulty and maybe are angry with us.

And so the ability to have equanimous love is the ability not to lose your connection with someone, your connection of love, care, kindness, goodwill. You can hold your ground and look at them, be with them, and not abandon the love, not override the love with other emotions and challenges. So my proposal is that the equanimous love is what maintains the connection. It's not a loss of connection.

And it is this ability to stay connected to that love, connected to another person through that love, that is the avenue for *samādhi*, for really staying there, entering into it, trusting it, being with it, letting it grow, letting it fill us. Stay, stay with it, relax into it. So that in *samādhi*, we are steadily saturating ourselves with that flow of love that can exist, uncompromised by anything else, uncompromised by reactivity.

So to assume a meditation posture, and maybe with a posture that's appropriate for you, your body and mind, but one that the body is going to house, the body somehow is going to be the container, the temple for love, for a connection with others that's characterized by friendliness, goodwill, kindness, deep appreciation, delight, a tenderness that's characterized by really being present for someone, present for their humanity, to see them through loving eyes. To not compromise the gaze of kindness, but to hold that gaze with equanimity, with balance, with strength. So to have a posture that's going to house this kind of love.

Adjusting your hands so that the hands and how they're positioned is one of they themselves express yes, I'm here, I'm rooted here. Maybe the feet too, adjusted, the legs adjusted, so yes, here at this spot. And then gently closing the eyes, and to begin with some fuller breaths, that with inhaling, there's an attitude, maybe a word, yes, yes to being here now, yes to being in this body here and now, yes to this living experience of being alive right now, and exhaling a second yes for this, relaxing into it.

Letting the breath return to normal, relaxing the belly, softening the belly, and letting your weight settle deep in your hip bones, sitting bones, deep into the lower belly, so you're beginning to feel stability and balance. Feeling of physical rootedness, weightedness, stability, here and now. That's a very distinct feeling in whatever you're thinking about. And to shift yourself from thinking to being in this stability.

And then bringing to mind a friend where the friendship is relatively uncomplicated, and a friend for whom you do feel you have an attitude of friendliness that's easy, easy and maybe light, for whom you have goodwill, kindness, someone for whom it's relatively easy to have something in the family of love for this person. And bring them to mind just enough that you don't get pulled into stories, analysis, just enough to awaken your delight at being present with them. Maybe how happy you are to see them again after a long time not seeing them. The joy, the delight, that kind of love, easy to be kind.

And offering them some *mettā*, letting your goodwill come into life as we're sitting here, wishing that they are happy. May you be happy. Maybe saying happy on the exhale and settling into how this wish of happiness feels good in you, as a pleasure. May you be happy.

And from the stability of your meditation, from thinking about them at a distance, if there's a physical feeling for your goodwill, settle into that feeling. If there's an inspired aspiration wanting them to be happy, let that aspiration fill you as you breathe in and breathe out, feeling the pleasure, feeling the warmth, feeling the wish for their happiness, where the rhythm of breathing supports a quieting of the thinking mind that makes room for more love and happiness.

And then imagine that you are going to hold that open heart, open, warm mind, well-wishing, with stability, with groundedness and rootedness, not giving it up, not making it dependent on how the other person is, whether they're being challenging or difficult or making choices which are not good. You will not let the connection of love be lessened. Maintain it steadily, so it's there in the ups and downs, that equanimous connection that stays there, regardless of the challenges you have.

I choose to love. I choose the connection of love that's unwavering, not dependent on your anger or desires, praise or blame, not dependent on the choices you make. I will stay with an open heart, and not give up this connection.

Being careful as you think about your friend to not have thoughts that disconnect you from this love, disconnect you from the friend. Stay stable and connected to that ray of love, the channel of love that's not dependent on what they do, but is committed to maintain that connection of love without any agitation, without being ruffled, as if your equanimous love rides out into the world towards your friend. On your breathing, on the exhale, you send out your care, your love. On the inhale, you receive them into your open heart.

And for these next minutes, relax into just this, the rhythm, giving and receiving, receiving the person in your heart in a stable way, balanced, and giving, sending out on the exhale whatever form of love that's available for you with no expectations in return.

And as we come to the end of this sitting, as you breathe in, filling yourself with love, filling yourself up throughout your body with the warmth, the tenderness, the warmth, the open-heartedness, and the exhale, sending it forth out into the world with no hesitation, no exceptions, no preoccupations, just love offered to the world, equanimous and broad. Breathing in, filling yourself, breathing out, filling the world with love.

And with our equanimous love, our capacity to love the whole world, may it contribute to the welfare and happiness of this world.

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May all beings be happy. May all beings be safe. May all beings be peaceful. May all beings be free. And may we keep a loving connection, always open.

Thank you.