

Guided Meditation: Generous Love

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Happy Monday to all of you, and welcome back. And coming to a whole different phase of our study of love that's been going on since the beginning of January, we're now coming to the part of love that becomes scary. And that is the expression of love, to enact love in the world with the people around us. And it's one thing to sit and meditate in love. It's another thing to open our hearts in meditation and have love be a private affair. It's another thing to have it enacted or expressed or come alive in the world.

One of the really important expressions of love in Buddhism is our generosity. A generous heart, a generous mind, a generous living of life, where we live from generosity, from a sense of almost like a sense of abundance, even if we have almost nothing or nothing in the world. That we feel like we have an abundance to give, even if it's our smiles and our asking someone how they are, that we can just live a generous life flowing out of us.

So to understand more deeply how these come together, one of the functions of meditation can be to quiet all the surface activity that we're caught up in. Surface activity of wanting and not wanting and figuring out. And that surface activity, often reactivity, has a momentum. It's self-generating. It keeps us going and going.

And when we sit down to meditate, we start feeling sometimes that momentum. We feel it in the tensions in the body. The shoulders might be higher. The belly is more contracted, and our muscles in our face might be a little tight. And there might be sensations in the body of restlessness, and sometimes a very powerful kind of restlessness to move and to shift and to fidget and to move, because the momentum of reactivity and fear and anxiety is so strong.

And the surface activity of the mind, the cycles of thinking and wanting and imagining and storytelling and projecting into the future and imagining scenarios that we might have to deal with, they can be caught. And all this reactive world is self-generating, and it keeps

going. And we sit down to meditate to let those become quiet, to let those become still. And so meditation, one of the ways to meditate, is the idea of not moving physically, unless you really need to, and beginning to not move mentally, not to follow the thoughts, be involved in them, react to them, to let things be radically, and let the reactivity, the surface momentum of activity, quiet, become stiller.

So, not so we can just be neutral or just be inactive, but so we can discover a deep source within from which our actions come. Our actions don't come from reactivity, from anxiety, from greed or hatred. They come from a deep source within that some people might call love.

So to assume a meditation posture, which you will be, I think you can allow yourself to be still, and to adjust your hands and arms so they're as comfortable as you can have them for these minutes. Maybe gently letting your attention travel up your spine and make small adjustments in the curvature of your spine so that also feels both at ease, comfortable, and alert. Softly closing your eyes. And as with your eyes closed, imagine that your eyes are turning inward. They no longer need to be concerned with the world around you. And now it's the world within you that you're gonna care for.

And in a gentle, relaxed way, become familiar with the body's experience of breathing. The movements of the belly, the chest, the diaphragm, and how there is an interplay of the body being still and the body being receptive to the gentle movements of breathing, where being still allows us to better feel the movements of breathing. And as you exhale, to soften and relax the body wherever it's easy, a little bit around the shoulders, the chest, or the belly, and the face.

And for some of you, part of what you feel in your body is the legacy of tensions you've carried, surface reactivity, activity you've been caught up in that gets stored in the body. It's okay. Allow it to be there. But allow it to be there in stillness, in spaciousness, a stillness that invites it to relax when it's ready.

And with the rhythm of breathing, let your attention feel and sense the thinking mind, not what you're thinking, but the energy and tension, pressure, agitation. All those are a legacy of and momentum of our preoccupations and concerns. And let some part of the mind, the broad mind, be still and soft to feel the movements of the mind and to invite them to settle and relax when they're ready.

And then settling into the body breathing again with a gentle rhythm of breathing is a reminder to let everything else just be. Everything held in a stillness. Everything, all the sur-

face activity of mind, body, and heart, has room to become still when it's ready. Finding a way to have an inner stillness, an inner place of quiet around which all the movements, any agitation, tension of body, mind, and heart can settle around with every breath, breathing with and through from the inner stillness that invites everything else to feel safe and relax.

And then to feel your way into the deepest place within, whether it's in your body or your heart or your mind, the place that's below reactivity, below preoccupations and thoughts, a place deep inside where there's a gentle feeling of safety, wellbeing, or a place that you imagine where that can be within you. And it's a *maṇḍala* place which both is you and is not your ordinary identity and sense of self. A *maṇḍala* place of tenderness, gentleness.

Is there anything that wants to be, anything that's being expressed there? Anything that wants to be a chance to move out, to be said or be done? Any seed that's sprouting with goodness, where something has some deep and integral integrity, and to just sit quietly, breathe with it, without trying to understand it or do anything about it, as if what it most wants is to be accompanied for a few minutes, breathing with it, sensing it, feeling the deepest place within, where there's a sense of goodness or safety, maybe some form of well-being deeper than any of the ways that you might feel the opposite. Maybe it's very small, maybe even shy.

And in that area, is there anything there that you associate with love, with care, kindness, compassion, loving joy, loving equanimity? And if there's nothing like love there, if there could be love there, what do you imagine it would be like? And if this deep source within, the love, could say something or express itself, what would it say? What would it do? How would it come alive in your life? How would you want to live your life if you lived it from this source deep inside, from this love?

And then from this source, quiet place within, to gaze outward now, with your mind's eye, out into the world, locally and far away, gazing upon the world with kindness, goodwill, seeing the world through the eyes of wishing everyone well, everyone happiness, imagining them all smiling.

May all beings be happy. May all beings be safe. May all beings be peaceful. May all beings be free. And may we live close to these wishes. May they guide us in how we live.

Thank you. And while I have my water and reboot here, if some of you would like to put in the chat what wants to be expressed from your deepest place, the source, the love inside, it might be nice to get a little sampling in a few words.