

Guided Meditation: Non-Harming

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Hello. Welcome to this meditation session.

And we are still on this journey of the Buddhist sentiment of love. And part of Buddhist practice involves the purification of love. Meaning that settling away of all the things that are extra, all the things sometimes that are confused for love or caught up in love.

So sometimes what people think is love is a strong desire. Strong desires for certainly pleasure, strong desire for safety, for praise, for adoration, strong desire for safety, for belonging, strong desires for love, recognition, strong desires to feel like they count, that they're important, that someone recognizes them as being a worthy person. There's a lot of needs that people have, and some of them are, should be, all of them, there's something we should respect and care for.

But in practice, especially meditation practice, a lot of these things can fall away. They're no longer needed. The activities that sustain them, the deeper emotional challenges that fuel them, become quieter and quieter.

And one of the wonderful things that happens is that there's a simplification of love. Or if it's okay to say this, a purification of love. And love stands out by itself.

And it can be love with no object. Just a warm-hearted, warm, joyous feeling of friendliness, delight, love, compassion, kindness, that just is in the nature of how our experience is right now. And one of the expressions, one of the integral parts of this simple, pure kind of love, it comes hand-in-hand with, or it is in itself, a dedication to non-harming, non-harming.

The Buddha said that when we harm others, we're harming ourselves. Those who love themselves would not harm anyone else. And the reason for this is that when there is a kind of

aggression of harming others, inevitably it diminishes and darkens and harms that very love that we're discovering.

And so to not harm is an expression of love. To not harm ourselves, not harm others.

So to assume a meditation posture and kind of take a little time to wiggle around, feel your sway back and forth, feel your posture, but with care, with love, like you're listening, feeling deeply into your body because you care. And how would you like to position the body to be present, fully present, alert, here?

And if there is a natural movement to close the eyes, let the eyelids come together. And on the next exhale, exhale a little bit more fully, longer. And as you do so, settle deep into your body, to the deepest places that can relax, release.

And from the depth of where you can relax inside, allow the inhale to begin and grow and expand through your body, appreciating that if you're aware of your breathing, you are present. You're alive and aware and here in the moment. And as you exhale, to relax the mind, the heart, the body, to let anything that's extra fall away.

Anything not about here and now can wait. So you're here, settling into your lived experience, breathing into your lived experience.

And rather than fixating on some concern or in some body sensation, see if you can have a broad awareness of your body that's more tuned into the hum, the warmth, the vibration of the body, soft, subtle feeling of flow, humming of the body with breathing, moving through that hum, like a quiet fish moving through the water, feeling your way into the quiet, quietude of your body, of your heart, a quiet that is not vacuous, but it is alive with something in the family of love, a warmth, a gentle goodwill, a kindness that needs nothing, wants nothing really, just simple love as a radiance, a hum into which you breathe, from which you breathe.

Maybe saying some word in the family of love, almost saying it in your thoughts, maybe even a non-verbal way, staying close, being reminded, opening up into love, repeating some word like love, *mettā*, compassion, and feeling or remembering or imagining the deepest, quietest form of love, tenderness, gentleness, kindness within you.

See if you can feel or recognize that in that love, there's also an orientation to harmlessness, to non-harming. That harming of any kind in thoughts, in feelings, in words or deeds is an intrusion, a diminishment of the simplicity of love, and that love itself wants to be true to non-harming.

And now feeling your way into the quiet, the quietude in your heart, your body, maybe in

your mind, the place where it feels both spacious and still. And in that place, might there be some glimmer of love, care, appreciation, feeling that of generosity, kindness, where being friendly is more natural than being hostile.

And with whatever friendliness towards the world you can have while you're sitting in meditation, where nothing much is needed to do or to say, to gaze upon the world in a friendly way, to gaze upon the world with eyes that want to do no harm, want well-being and happiness for this world, and wishing from deep within as an expression of the deepest place of love:

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

And may the way that each of us are present for others today, like strangers and people we know, may our very presence include the depths of our goodwill. May our presence include gazing upon the world kindly, on others kindly. May we be friends with all.

Thank you.