

Guided Meditation: The Love of Non-Clinging

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Hello and welcome to our meditation. And in the flow continuity of these six months, where love has been the thread through all the teachings, we're coming kind of to the culmination of love in a sense. And one of the characteristics that relates to meditation is that the deepest form of love, or the most significant form of love that at some point arises through Buddhist practice, has a lot to do not with the presence of something, but with the absence. You could say that it involves the presence of peace, deep, abiding stillness, peace, quiet. But as soon as you use those words, as meaningful and inspiring as they can be, they kind of box us in, supposed to be peaceful, supposed to be still, it is this thing. And so the tradition tends to avoid that by focusing a lot on what is absent, what's not there, and trusting that what's left is meaningful, significant, wonderful.

And sometimes it's described one way, sometimes another way, sometimes peace, sometimes stillness, sometimes timelessness, sometimes, you know, spaciousness, all kinds of ways. But that can vary from day to day. So the same thing with love. And so the primary characteristic of this deep love is the absence of any type of clinging. And that might seem like not an inspiring idea in and of itself, but there's some kind of clinging involved in any ways in which we're agitated, any ways in which we are reactive, any ways in which we have ill will or have greed. Any ways in which we are anxious, where anxiety is different than fear.

And so to have all these extra reactivities, extra unnecessary functionings going on that are all expressions of clinging, have clinging fall away. And then what's left there, trusting what's left, discovering there's a treasure in what's left. Without clinging, there is a kind of love that maybe defies easy definition, easy description, but it's a kind of love which is very simple. It comes without a lot of fanfare, and it's a natural, simple care, caring love, loving care. Not

because we have to, not because we're doing it, not because even it's a conscious choice exactly, but because it's what's left. And this deep sense of what's left when there's no clinging, and finding peace there, but more importantly, finding care.

So to assume a meditation posture, a posture of confidence, the confidence in the value of being present and aware without adding anything on top of that. But to do that with a confident posture, whether sitting, standing, lying down, adjusting so the back, the chest, the head somehow become expressions of confidence, gently closing the eyes, and to begin without doing anything or doing next to nothing. If you start thinking about things, you're doing something. Can you intuit or orient yourself to the simplicity of being that maybe is prior to all the doings of the mind? A simplicity of being, stillness, a peace, a simplicity that's deeper within you than any place that reacts, that is driven, that is attached, a place of being, of attention, that's closer to just a being, beingness of awareness rather than a doing.

Being here with the closest thing you have to doing nothing but being aware. Part of the alertness that allows you to do nothing, next to nothing, is to be alert to what arises in awareness without your involvement, without your making it happen. Simple acts of perception, of knowing, the spontaneous arising of sensations, sounds, thought, the movements in the body of breathing. When you're able to do next to nothing, even if it's only for a moment or two, and you sense, feel in your body what's left, what is left, what's there, and if that itself is a doing, can you go deeper and deeper to where there's no doing, just being, and sense and feel, maybe a moment at a time, what that is like. And if you can feel or intuit the simplest way of being below or beneath any activity, reactivity, thoughts, concerns you have. The simplicity of being that's always there.

Is there something in there that is a simple care, not as an active thing, but almost more as an availability, an orientation of care that needs nothing, wants nothing, but is a natural care arising from where there is no clinging? Might there be a kind of love or care, tenderness or sweetness, that's present without any doing? Any doing diminishes quiet, peaceful form of care that is there without need or obligation, force, fear, without greed or clinging. Maybe a form of love or care which is so simple and so ordinary it's easy to overlook.

And as we come to the end of this sitting, to take a few moments to just feel how you are, as if you've permission to be just as you are, making room to be as you are, without picking it up, pushing it away, making room to be okay with whatever is happening, so that how you are is held in a wide awareness that allows things to be as they are. Wide awareness that includes a gentle care, a gentle love, kindness, friendliness, sweetness, even if what you're aware of is not that way.

And then to expand that sphere of awareness, of space, of care out into the world. And for a few moments, to hold the whole world in a wide, peaceful awareness. Like this photograph from the moon of the earth in space, vast space holding this planet, this world, in vast, spacious care, something precious, something tender, something special to treasure the whole world, invoking a simple, ordinary care, free of clinging, wishing, may all beings be happy, may all beings be safe, may all beings be peaceful, may all beings be free. Thank you.