

The Courage of the Heart –Living the Brahmaviharas- Home practices #1-2026

Next Class 2/13/26 6:00 – 8:30pm

- 1) **Sit every day.** Try sitting for a minimum of 15-30 minutes per day (more if you are able). Please practice your meditation in silence. **Those newer to practice can 10 minutes a day** and check out CIMC's Beginner Drop-in, Beginners workshop, Way of Awareness.
- 2) **Gratitude Practices & Fill out the Buddy Group form for CIMC:**
Write down in a journal, 3 things you are grateful for each day. Can be anything. When Buddies are assigned: Text or Email them, 3 things you are grateful for each day.
- 3) **Setting A Year-Long Intention, Vow, Dedication:**
Finish writing your yearlong intention, vow, dedication (What is my motivation to come into this Brahmavihara practice? What is my aspiration in life? What is my intention/vow right now?). **Put it someplace where you keep special things.** Then, as you go through the year, let it be your compass, your underlying direction, in spite of changing outer circumstances. Let it carry you.
- 4) **The Brahmaviharas (Divine abodes, divine homes):** By reflecting & practicing these qualities in your life & in meditations, you can establish the brahmaviharas as your home. The *brahmaviharas* are a gift of love that the Buddha himself realized and embodied. This is an opportunity to practice this path by which we learn to develop skillful intentions, attitudes, mental states & let go of unskillful ones. Cultivating an awakened life means aligning ourselves with a vast vision of what is possible for us. The *brahmaviharas* are tools for sustaining our experience of that vision.

*****Please read the *Brahmaviharas* list below once a day*****

- **Loving kindness (*metta*):** friendliness, unconditional warmth, caring. *Metta* is a generosity of heart that wishes well-being, happiness to all beings (including yourself). The practice of *metta* uncovers the force of love that can uproot fear, anger, guilt. The culmination of *metta* is to become a friend to oneself and to all of life.
Near enemy: a quality that looks like *metta* but isn't, is attachment or selfish affection
Far enemy: the opposite, is ill will or hatred
- **Compassion (*karuna*):** described as a quivering, tenderness of the heart in response to suffering. It is the strong feeling of wanting to alleviate pain & suffering. Compassion is born out of the wisdom of seeing things as they are. Compassion also arises from the practice of inclining the mind, of refining our intention.
Near enemy is pity. Far enemy is cruelty or a wish to see another harmed.
- **Appreciative joy (*mudita*):** joy that is filled with contentment & depends upon our capacity to take delight. We rejoice when we see others happy, we rejoice in their happiness & their well-being becomes our own. Rather than believing that happiness is a limited commodity and the more there is for somebody

else, the less there's going to be for us. Appreciative joy is the understanding that someone else's happiness doesn't threaten our happiness. It actually enhances our own happiness.

Near enemy is exuberance. Far enemy is envy or resentment.

- **Equanimity (*upekkha*):** balanced, spacious opening to all aspects of life. Meeting each experience with nonattachment, non-discrimination with strength & softness. Equanimity understands things as they are. It's knowing that no matter how hard we want somebody to be free of suffering, we're actually not in control of the unfolding of the universe. This understanding shouldn't make us pull away, but rather, can give us the strength to sustain our caring, because it's not all tied up with our own agenda and our own sense of demand

Near enemy is indifference. Far enemy is reactivity, impulsiveness or clinging.

5) Notice in sitting practice and daily life when:

- Any of the above intentions, attitudes, states of heart or mind are present in your body, heart, mind—even for a moment.
- Any of the above they are not present even for a moment.
- Any the near and far “enemies” are present.
- Please be gentle with this exercise. We are starting slowly.

HAVE FUN!

6) Book & Guidelines: Try the classic - “Loving Kindness, the Revolutionary Art of Happiness” written by Sharon Salzberg (for those who want a book)

7) Agreed upon Guidelines for Yearlong Program. *Practicing the ways below, together, every month can support us in our everyday lives through noticing our immediate reactions. Remembering that we have an opportunity to pause, check in, & choose how we respond.*

- **Show up. Pay Attention.** Speak your truth without blame or judgment. Let go of outcome and be open to outcome.
- **All perspectives are welcome here.** Notice your reaction to what is shared and have that be your practice in that moment.
- **Everything we do here is voluntary.** It is a courageous & generous act to share. It is a compassionate & generous act to deeply listen.
- **Speak about what's alive for you in this moment from your heart,** your own experience, refrain from intellectual or philosophical sharing or long story telling, notice if may be judging or blaming another's perspective. ***Is it possible to talk from a place of kindness and love?***
- **Notice what arises as you speak.** Are we in touch with what is true and alive or we wanting to impress, to feel important, to be liked?
- **Listen deeply; notice what arises within you** as you listen. Where do we go when someone says something we agree with? When we hear something that triggers us?

- **Please be lean of expression**, meaning be mindful to stay on point vs. going tangential. We are a large group, and it would be good to hear from as many voices as possible. WAIT “Why Am I Talking?”
- **If you’ve already spoken**, think twice before choosing to speak again as it would be good to hear from those who have not yet
- **Please refrain from offering advice** unless it is specifically solicited or unless you ask the person’s permission.
- **Please honor confidentiality**. If you need to share with others outside of this circle, please share from your own direct experience not that of other members in the sangha.