

Aging with Wisdom and Compassion Week 3 (2/2/26)

******Reminder:** Although the class starts at 10:30 (ET), I will come to class at 10:20 for Q&A

1. **Sitting:** For a minimum of 10-20 minutes per day. Do your best! Keep your meditation simple (no apps or if you use them only a couple of times a week)
2. **Practice Gratitude:** Text or e-mail your buddies, 3 things you are grateful for every day. They can be anything. Helps to lighten the heart! Thank someone every day!
3. **Continue to Contemplate the following:**
 - a. I am of the nature to age. I am subject to aging. Aging is unavoidable. -*Buddha*
 - b. All conditioned phenomena are impermanent. Their nature is to arise and pass away.
 - c. Living in accordance with this truth brings the highest happiness. -*Buddha*
 - d. **Remember: The Four Noble Truths:**
 - i. **The 1st Noble Truth.** The truth of suffering (*dukkha*) means: suffering, sorrow, anguish, discontent, insecurity, and unsatisfactoriness. Suffering is a reality in life. We all experience the pain of birth, old age, death, sorrow, grief, despair, separation from those we love, and not getting what we want. Dukkha also means understanding that everything is changing, impermanent. No experience, no matter how wonderful, will bring us a deep lasting satisfaction because it is always changing. **Recall that** constantly trying to get what we like and avoid what we don't like in the world will involve suffering, because trying to arrange the constantly changing world to our satisfaction is an attempt to achieve the unachievable, so we will constantly be frustrated and disappointed.
 - ii. **The Second Noble Truth** states that our clinging, craving, attachment to our desires are the very cause of our unhappiness.
 - iii. Happily- **The Third Noble Truth** states the good news. That there is a way out. This is the path of happiness – not the path of misery!
 - iv. **The Fourth Noble Truth** is the Eightfold Noble Path to Happiness.

4. **Receive Suffering with Equanimity (spaciousness, balance, poise) The wonderful news is that you can experience dukkha with equanimity.** Equanimity is a form of happiness. If you can receive *dukkha*-suffering with equanimity, it's no longer suffering-*dukkha*. Impermanence can be a devastating fact of life. Impermanence can also be amazingly beautiful— if you receive it with equanimity. It can be ease-peace itself. How? Try the 4 ways below this week!

- **First, we can practice turning our attention toward whatever suffering we encounter.** What- ever form it takes, anxiety or fear, impatience, frustration, we can make our suffering an object of our Mindfulness. Rather than try to get rid of it, we can do our best, to understand it, to open to it, make room for it, with spaciousness, balance, let it reveal itself to us. The aim is not to dwell on our suffering or its causes; rather, it is to see & clearly recognize our experience for what it is.

- **Second, we can cultivate an attitude of acceptance, of allowing.**
Confronted with diminishment of any of our senses, or a personal loss, or a grave diagnosis, we may adopt an attitude of resistance or of passive resignation. But there is a 3rd possibility, a wholehearted engagement. We can accept the reality of what has occurred, while acting to “effect “the best possible outcome.” By fully accepting the facts, we can ground our hopes on actual conditions.
- **Third and most importantly, we can use “balm” of meditation (not the bomb):** The most effective way of being with the truth of suffering is a basic meditation practice. Just silence. To simply sit in the present moment of being alive here, now. Feeling the support that comes from the life force in us, that we are alive, that we are breathing—when we do that, we can experience whatever arises and passes away in the body, mind, heart, without fear, stories or proliferations. Over time, we can discover for ourselves that our own suffering and the suffering of this world, can be met by the healing presence of a balanced, spacious heart and mind
- **Fourth: when the unbearable enters our lives:** At times, we experience unbearable suffering as grief, loss, dread in turning the Mindful awareness toward experience of great difficulty, one can get flooded and overwhelmed. It is not helpful to feel paralyzed—physically, mentally, emotionally or spiritually. When we are overwhelmed, we must skillfully address not just the issues facing us but the experience of being overwhelmed. By using the practice of wise withdrawal. We withdraw our attention from the flooding of the senses due to something devastating. Not with the intention of escaping or pushing away. We withdraw with the compassionate, tender intention to be aware of our own limitations and abilities in the moment. We do not withdraw with the purpose of repressing or denying the experience. We wisely withdraw so that we might be able to re-engage and return our attention when we have the strength, the skills, and the capacity to turn more fully toward a predominantly overwhelming First Noble Truth.

This ebb & flow of practice, turning toward and wisely withdrawing—is like the opening & closing of blossoms in nature—is the ebb & flow of life itself. It is the natural capacity for us to take care of ourselves and to live life fully- the 100.000 sorrows. It is the very definition of resilience in the face of hardship. Or called “skillful means.” We make a wise and compassionate choice based on what is possible, what is beneficial, in the moment!

*“That choice can only be made with Mindfulness. That choice is practice itself”-
Larry Yang*

