

The Courage of the Heart –Living the Brahmaviharas- Home Practices* - #3

Next class 4/10/26. *If you don't have a buddy Group, try to find the e-mail with a buddy survey that came out in Jan after the workshop. Fill it out & e-mail it back to the office.*

- 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. ***During this month, devote one meditation session a week to formal loving kindness (yourself, benefactor, good friend, neutral person, difficult person, all beings) How does this affect your daily life?*** You can use phrases from class, your phrases, a word or the essence of kindness. (phases below) ***
- 2) **Walking Metta Practice: *During this month, Add Metta practice while walking- One session a week. As you walk focus on the silent repetition of metta phrases. Start with yourself and include phrases to your surroundings- a person walking by, a dog, a bird call- Wishing them well.***
- 3) **Gratitude Practices:** Text or email your buddies 3 things you are grateful for each day.
- 4) ****Read the Brahmavihara sheet once a day.** (below) ***
- 5) **Metta or Kindness: Metta is the Pali word which translates as loving kindness, friendliness, holistic kindness. Be open with a friendly heart to yourself and to everyone. Remember: Metta is a deep friendship with life. (Three Metta suttas are attached to the HP letter for all who want them. And other Metta suttas, if interested <https://www.leighb.com/mettasuttas.htm>**

**With goodwill for the entire cosmos,
Cultivate a limitless heart:
Above, below, & all around,
Unobstructed, without hostility or hate
Whether standing, walking,
Sitting, or lying down,
As long as one is alert,
One should be resolved on this mindfulness.
This is called a sublime abiding, here and now.**

- 6) **Metta: Reflections & Practices Talk over with Buddies on, zoom, in-person Reflections: *Also Buddy Groups may discuss one of the Metta suttas***
 - **Reflect on:** *Please give some thought to what points of view you could draw on that would help you have greater good will or loving kindness towards others. What aspect of another person can you consider that would incline you to feel friendlier toward them? Please write up a list of 5 points of view, reflections, or attitudes that would help you have more kindness towards others.*
 - **Reflect on:** *What would it be to live in this world w/o contention? What would it be like to experience life w/o demanding it to be other than it is? To care for the well-being of others regardless as to whether or not they meet our expectations, or fulfill our desires?*

- **Reflect on:** *The depth of trust, to trust yourself so fully that you know metta will flow to all beings: to those that we like as well as those we do not like, those who have helped us and those who have hurt us regardless of preferences. To cultivate loving kindness or friendliness as a gentle invitation to soften our hearts, to connect deeper with all of life, to abide in the wonder of an unconflicted relationship to all things and all beings.*

Practices: PICK one practice from the list below for 2 weeks. Try another for the next 2 weeks. Share what you learned with your assigned buddy group.

- In Daily Life Practice:** When you are in public situations, privately practice generating intentions of goodwill, well-wishing kindness, friendliness, loving kindness to the people around you. How does this affect you?
- Choose a person who is neutral (not strong liking or disliking) to you** for 5 days focus your loving kindness practice on generating whatever goodwill or loving kindness toward this person that you can. Notice if and how your attitude toward this person changes over those 5 days.
- Choose a person you are not getting along with.** For 5 days focus your loving kindness practice on generating whatever goodwill or loving kindness toward this person that you can. Notice if and how your attitude toward this person changes over those 5 days.
- Noticing times during your days when your heart is at ease, in connection with life.** Love every day, as many minutes as you can, take the risk to love life. Love all of life while walking the dog, while exercising, everywhere you are, whatever you are doing- you can be silently cultivating a intention of care & goodwill. Every moment when you drop obsessive preoccupation with self concern & judgments of the inadequacies of ourselves or of others, you open to a vast, still & loving truth beyond words, beyond contention.
- Noticing times when you experience moments of the mind settling down, make a point of noticing the absence of ill will.** Once recognized, practice keeping this experience, the absence of aversion, in mind as the meditation object. See this absence of ill will as love. Do your best to sense its goodness and beauty & cultivate a deepening appreciation for it. Notice its capacity to expand to fill the space of the body and mind. Notice as other people come to mind that this kind & compassionate presence is also willing to include them. - Mark Numberg

*****Metta Phrases:** Pick from below, create your own, use one word, or the essence of *metta*.

May (I/you/all beings):

be safe and well

be peaceful

live with ease and with kindness

be safe, peaceful, free of suffering

be happy

be healthy

be safe and well

be peaceful

live in love and in compassion

be filled with loving kindness

be safe from inner & outer harm

be well in body and mind

be strong and confident

be at ease and happy

Extra Credit Kindness Question: Am I being as kind as I can in this moment?

The work is to not let the burdens of the world close you. The work is to not let the hardships of the world harden your heart. The work is to not withdraw your care simply because life is difficult. The work is to become gentler and more compassionate, despite the troubles plaguing the country, the world the planet. That is true strength, and that is what begins to turn the tides to love.

SENDING LOVE & HEART WHEELS

*****The Brahmaviharas (sheet): (*Divine abodes, divine homes*)** By reflecting & practicing these qualities in your life & in meditations, you can establish the brahma-viharas as your home. The brahmaviharas are a gift of love that the Buddha himself realized & 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.

- **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 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;
Far enemy, the opposite, is 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.
- **Appreciative joy (mudita):** joy that 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.
- **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

- **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.