

The Courage of the Heart: Living the Brahmaviharas- Home Practices #4***

Please have FUN with the Home practices & your buddy groups!

Next class 5/8/26.

- 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 mediation session to compassion practice (Someone you love, yourself, all beings)** **How does this affect your daily life?** You can use phrases from class, your phrases, a word or the essence of compassion that we talked about in class. (some phrases below #6) ***

- 2) **Gratitude Practices:**
Write down, 3 things you are grateful for each day. Can be anything. Text or Email them, 3 things you are grateful for each day.

- 3) ***Read the *Brahmavihara* info once a day.** (placed at the end of this home practice)

- 4) *****Compassion or Karuna. Karuna is the Pali word which -translates as the heart that trembles in response to suffering, to pain. It's a movement of the heart. It is the strong feeling of wanting to alleviate pain & suffering.** The Buddha described this feeling as a quivering or tenderness of the heart. Compassion is the spontaneous response of an open heart. Compassion arises when we come close to suffering. When we open to the suffering of ourselves or others.
The courage of compassion is said to come from equanimity. Because we feel compassion in response to seeing pain, we need equanimity to be able to open to the pain. In order to not deny it or pretend it's not there, or repackage it so it sounds or looks better, we need to actually see it for what it is. We also need courage by opening to willingness to care for pain and sorrow with a caring connection.
Compassion is the first step in allowing the suffering to unwind in the space of tender, caring. *Near enemy is pity. Far enemy is cruelty*

- 5) *****Compassion: Talk with Buddies: on phone, zoom, in-person**
 - **Reflections:**
 - **Reflect on:** *What is compassion? (above) What isn't compassion? (Anger, aversion, righteous rage, denial, fear, guilt, separation, indifference, pity, despair, grief, suffering) What allows you to be compassionate? (Mindfulness, being at ease, gentleness, willingness to listen to sorrow wherever we meet it). What stops you from being compassionate? (Fear, anger, disappointments, judgments, resistance, ill will hatred)*
 - **Reflect on:** *What does suffering have to do with compassion? What does acceptance have to do with compassion? Does letting go have anything to do with compassion? If so, what are we letting go of?*
 - **Reflect on:** *What does it mean to be willing to turn toward your pain or other people's pain with compassion?*

- **Daily Life Practices:** *“If you want others to be happy, practice compassion. If you want to be happy practice compassion”- Dalai Lama*
 - **What ways can you cultivate an open heart of connection or practice compassion with yourself or others? Make a list. Try a couple on your list.**
 - **Notice when there is a willingness to meet:** irritation, impatience, frustration, suffering and when there isn't. What is happening in those moments?
 - **Practice the voices of Compassion:** Patience, kind, tolerant, forgiving
 - **One compassionate: word, action, thought, or just listening in silence: can reduce another person's suffering & bring, joy, ease, connection.**

6) ****Compassion Phrases: Pick from** below, create your own, use one word, or the essence of Compassion.

- **May You, I, All beings):**

care for this pain,
care for this sorrow
be at ease

be held in tenderness, & in compassion
your/my suffering & struggles be held in great compassion
your/my pain & sorrow be eased
you/I be at peace

be free of your/ my pain and my sorrow.
hold your/my pain with tenderness and compassion.
forgive your/myself for past mistakes.
love yourself/myself just as you/I am.
be kind and patient with yourself/myself / and others.
be safe and protected.
be free from anguish / and the causes of anguish

- *****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 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

7) **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.