

## The Courage of the Heart –Living the Brahmaviharas- New Home practices\*\*\*

Please Have FUN with the Home practices Read them & practice what you can.

Share in your buddy group. **Last workshop Dec 9th 10:00am-4:00 pm**

- 1) **\*\*\*Sit every day.** Try sitting for a minimum of 15-30 minutes per day. Please practice your meditation in silence. **During this month, Before sitting.** Reflect on Loving Kindness, Compassion, Appreciative Joy, and Equanimity: **During the sitting,** notice any intentions of Loving Kindness, Compassion, Appreciative Joy, and Equanimity. **After the sitting:** Notice how the Brahmaviharas affect your daily life?
- 2) **Gratitude Practices:**  
Notice 3 things you are grateful for each day. Text or Email them to your buddies
- 3) **\*Read the Brahmavihara info once a day.** (Placed at the end of this home practice)
- 4) **Remember To Pause** throughout your day. ☺ (10 seconds will help)
- 5) **\*\*\*Each of the Brahmaviharas has an affective element to them.**  
**Notice** any moments of unhesitating kindness in your life have the elements of warmth and tenderness. **Notice** that any moments of compassion bring the qualities of deep care, connectedness and responsiveness. **Notice** any moments of joy have the elements of gratitude, gladness, aliveness, and vitality. **Notice** any moments of equanimity have the elements of poise, balance, spaciousness and steadiness. **Notice** any glimpses you have in your life of these qualities reveal the possibility for you to know and trust these qualities in your heart. The seeds of freedom lie in your hearts. They show us a way of living our lives rooted in immeasurable kindness; compassion, joy and equanimity are already present within us.
- 6) **\*\*\* Just a few Equanimity Practices from class:**
  - a) **Equanimity is the expression of love when it understands the conditional unfolding of all things.** Equanimity is an essential foundation for all authentic expressions of love and brings a strong flavor of ease or peace to all the beautiful brahmaviharas. Equanimity allows one to be intimate even when things are confusing or there seems that there is nothing one can do. It is equanimity that allows love to be unconditional. Equanimity allows the goodwill and good wishes to generously flow to that person. One traditional reflection goes like this, "You are the owner of your actions. Your happiness and your sorrow depend upon your actions, not upon my wishes for you. Still, I care for you and wish well for you."
  - b) **The near enemy of equanimity is indifference.** Indifference is based on fear. True equanimity is not a withdrawal; it is a balanced and spacious engagement with all aspects of life. It is opening to the whole of life with composure and ease of mind, accepting the beautiful and terrifying nature of all things. Equanimity embraces the loved and the unloved, the agreeable and the disagreeable, the pleasure and pain.
  - c) **Another way to cultivate equanimity is to be aware of physical space.** We often focus on objects & not the space they occur in. Becoming aware of space helps the mind find its own spaciousness and ease. **Try sky gazing.** In this practice, one sits outside and gazes into the sky, taking the volume of space as one's meditation object. This can help the mind rest & open. **Try this indoors.** In a room, instead of focusing on objects, notice the space defined by the enclosure. **Try this practice in a**

**conversation.** Notice the person you are talking with in the full field of vision, noticing the space in the room while participating in the conversation.

- 7) **\*\*\*Cultivating equanimity in Daily Life:** Meeting our experience as it unfolds  
**Reflect:** Without equanimity, we are like a ship battered by the storms of life. Using this image, bring attention to the body. **What supports you to keep righting the ship, so it comes into balance?**

**Practice:** Grounding attention in the body or breath, feel the contact of the body with the earth and imagine it like a mountain. The mountain too is touched by life's storms, but through its rootedness in the earth, it becomes unshakeable.

- **Notice** the habit of reactivity, pushing and pulling on experience.
- **Can you relax the body** as a way of letting go of grasping and aversion?
- **What happens when you do this?**

**Practice:** Bring interest to the possibility of shifting perspective; open to a bigger picture. Stay curious and gentle as you practice with the questions below. Be aware and feel any ease that arises as you practice in these ways.

- **How** am I seeing this?
- **What** could be another way?
- **Bring** to mind that everything changes over time?
- **Bring** to mind someone else's point of view?

8) **Equanimity: Reflections & Practices: (Talk over with Buddies)**

**Reflections and Practices:**

- **Continue to reflect on the value of an easeful or peaceful heart.** *It is not within your power to save the world, and it is within your power to add whatever you can, with a kind, caring and easeful heart. You can tend to the portion of the world that you touch, you can add some beauty and understanding to the world, you can be the one calm person in the boat. By developing equanimity, you show others that it is possible for them to do so as well. Please join the forces of peace in this complex unfolding of life-in those moments you feel that spacious ease, radiant calm, balance-you return to the essence of equanimity. Let it grow our world needs this now!*
- **Continue to Reflect on:** *What are some of the factors that help you to be equanimous? How does meditation help? What understandings help? How can you make these supportive factors be a more regular part of your life?*
- **Notice:** *when you feel calm & settled, then notice how balanced, poised, even minded, or spacious, you feel when you're calm. Notice the relationship between feeling agitated and your ability to hold experiences with equanimity.*

- 9) **\*\*\*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

#### 10) 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.