

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. **Next class 10/13/23.**

- 1) *****Sit every day.** Try sitting for a minimum of 15-30 minutes per day. Please practice your meditation in silence. **During this month, notice any feelings of poise, balance, spaciousness, or evenness. How does this affect your daily life?**
- 2) **Gratitude Practices:**
Write down, 3 things you are grateful for each day. Can be anything. Text or Email them to your buddies, 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) *****Equanimity or Upekkha (Pali word):** is an unwavering balance, a spaciousness, an evenness of mind, remaining centered when surrounded by turmoil, radiant calm, stillness of heart/mind, unshakeable freedom, an inner state that cannot be upset by gain/loss, fame/shame, praise/blame, pleasure/pain. *Equanimity:* is a quality of mind and heart that when developed, allows one to meet every kind of experience with both strength and a softness or fluidity that doesn't get caught by circumstances. To discover its power within is one of the greatest joys in practice. **Upekkha is the Pali word which translates as, meaning "to look over."** It refers to the equanimity that arises from observation, the ability to see without being caught by what we see. Upekkha also refers to the ease that comes from seeing a bigger picture. Also, "to see with patience." or "seeing with understanding." (Review Equanimity on *****The Brahmaviharas (sheet)**)
- 5) **Some Super helpful practices to allow Equanimity to unfold:** The fact is, you can't know what changes your life will bring or what the ultimate consequences will be. We don't know how we will feel. However, we can open to how we relate and respond. Equanimity allows for the unknowable uncontrollable nature of things to be just as they are. **(some possible phrases below)**
 - **Choose something in your life— a situation or person in which you feel you have a lot of equanimity.** Reflect and slowly direct any equanimity phrases that resonate with you towards that situation. Say them over & over slowly, silently, & stay connected to your body. Notice how it feels as you invoke these phrases. If you notice a feeling of equanimity or calm, let it be there & spread.
 - **Choose a situation where you have very little equanimity.** Begin to direct the phrases towards that situation and see what happens. If equanimity arises, let it be there. Keep repeating the phrases. Let the feeling spread. If frustration, grief, or apathy arises, see if you can gently notice with Mindfulness what you are feeling and let it be. Send equanimity phrases to yourself.
- **Some phrases:** (In class: May I embrace change with stillness an calm, May I deeply accept this moment just as it is, May my home be a home of balance, and spaciousness)

- *All beings are the owners of their karma. Their happiness and unhappiness depends upon their actions, Not upon my wishes for them.*
- *accept things as they are, or may I accept myself just as I am*
- *be undisturbed by the comings and goings of events.*
- *Walk Evenly over the uneven*
- *Be at ease with myself and the world*
- *I care for you but cannot keep you from suffering/sorrow.*
- *I wish you happiness but cannot make your choices for you.*
- *meet life's joys and sorrows with balance, spaciousness, equanimity.*
- *see things clearly, just as they are.*

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

Reflections:

- **Reflect on:** *a time in your life when you felt present, poised, even minded, balanced while in the midst of some exciting or difficult activity? Remember a time in your life when you felt very present for what was happening and also able to see the bigger picture of what was occurring? How did it feel to not be caught up and/or lost in the activity and still experience it? How did it feel in your body?*
- **Reflect on:** *if you are put off by their ideas of equanimity, fearing that it asks you to have a cool aloofness, an indifference to your experience & the world around you. What are your ideas about equanimity? How do you distinguish it from indifference or neutrality?*
- **Reflect on:** *What are some of the factors that help you to be equanimous? How does meditation help? What understandings help? How can you bring make these supportive factors be a more regular part of your life?*

Practices: Please Share with you Buddies, what you learned. 😊

- **In daily sitting meditation:** *notice any feelings of poise, balance, even mindedness or spaciousness. If you don't experience a sense of balance or spaciousness, then explore what prevents you from being present & feeling even minded with what has arisen.*
- **At the end of the day:** *recollect if there were times when you felt indifferent or disconnected from your experience. How does that feeling compare to the feeling of equanimity that you had been exploring? What prevents you from feeling connected and equanimous to your experience?*
- **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.*

7) *****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 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

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.