

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 11/10/23** (poem at the end)

- 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 Equanimity: calm, spaciousness & balance. During the sitting, notice any feelings of poise, balance, spaciousness, or evenness. After the sitting: Notice how this affects your daily life?
- 2) **Gratitude Practices:**
Notice 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 a way of being present, a quality of heart/mind that we cultivate and nourish in our ongoing journey of investigation. Life does not stand still. Life is not exempt from change. Equanimity is equally fluid. Equanimity is a responsive way of meeting our shifting lives, our changing bodies & minds and all of the events of this world that we are asked to hold. **We often cultivate Equanimity in the moments we feel agitated, shattered, lost, and unbalanced. Equanimity in sitting and in daily life takes courage-** it is a practice of meeting and understanding change, loss, unpredictability that we fear and to make a commitment to the freedom of our hearts in the midst of what ever is happening.
Equanimity asks us to question if our hearts are shattered by the changing conditions and events or by our reactions to them. Can we find another way to relate to them?

Every heart holds the seeds of resilience, spaciousness, balance and the capacity for liberating wisdom and compassion. We all have the ability to stand with grace in the midst of our lives and in our world. **This ability rests on nourishing equanimity in as many moments that we can.** Recall the tree & its branches & leaves swaying while the trunk being steady.(You can also review Equanimity from past home practices)

“Training in equanimity is learning to open the door to all, welcoming all beings, inviting life to come visit. Of course, as certain guests arrive, we’ll feel fear and aversion. We allow ourselves to open the door just a crack if that’s all that we can presently do, and we allow ourselves to shut the door when necessary. Cultivating equanimity is a work in progress. We aspire to spend our lives training in the loving-kindness and courage that it takes to receive whatever appears—sickness, health, poverty, wealth, sorrow, and joy. We welcome and get to know them all.” – Pema Chodron

5) Equanimity: Reflections & Practices: (Talk over with Buddies)

Reflections and Practices:

- **Reflect on and practice:** *All of us share the human condition of aging, sickness and death. We share the possibility of vast depths of compassion and understanding and the possibility of great despair fear, confusion. We share the human longing to be free from pain and sorrow even as we know that our lives will continue to be touched by pain and sorrow. Our human longing to be happy*

and safe even as we know this cannot always be so. Our worlds intersect in our longing to protect those we love from distress and loss, even as we know that is beyond our power. **Equanimity knows the great capacity to embrace this paradox.**

- **Reflect on the value of an easeful or peaceful heart.** When we can train a peaceful heart within ourselves, we can bring blessings and peace to others. 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 bring 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.

6) **Some helpful phrases from class to allow Equanimity to unfold:**

May I learn to accept the arising and passing of all things with equanimity, spaciousness and balance. May I be open balanced, and at ease in the midst of change. May I rest in not knowing, May I find ease in stillness, May I be equally near all things. 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

Also you can review: phrases from last month's home practices

- 7) *****The Brahmaviharas (sheet): (Divine abodes, divine homes)** By reflecting & practicing these qualities in your life & in meditations, you can establish the brahmaviharas 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

8) 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.

POEM: Clearing - Martha Postlethwaite

**Do not try to serve
the whole world
or do anything grandiose. Instead, create
a clearing
in the dense forest
of your life
and wait there
patiently,
until the song
that is yours alone to sing
falls into your open cupped hands and you recognize and greet it. Only then
will you know
how to give yourself
to the world
so worthy of rescue.**