

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

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

Next class 6/12/26.

- 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 daily meditation 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 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) *****Compassion or Karuna-** *is a heart-mind that is motivated by cherishing other living beings & an intention or a wish to release them from their suffering. Compassion practices purifies the heart-mind from separateness- inclining the heart towards compassion for others and yourself. There is so much to learn about it everyday! Takes great courage to open to suffering. Compassion is sensitivity, not grounded in pity, repulsion or fear, arising from the heart's fearless inclusive capacity to recognize universal kinship and belonging, especially in suffering. Can you move through the world with that open, tender heart? Can your tender heart of compassion flutter in the face of universal and individual suffering?*

- 5) *****Compassion: Reflections & Practices Talk over with Buddies**
Reflections:
 - **Reflect on:** *What allows you to open your heart with connection?*
 - **Reflect on:** *What stops you from letting go of separation?*
 - **Reflect on:** *What do you need to learn about compassion to be free?*
 - **Reflect on:** *If at times, suffering is reactivity- a non-acceptance of what is? And how, at times, it obscures the natural ease that we are.*
 - **Reflect on:** *If compassion allows suffering to unwind.*
 - **Reflect:** *Can you let the natural radiance of compassion, and kindness emerge and touch your heart or the heart of another?*

*****Daily Life Practices:**

- **As you move through your day**, silently direct the phrases toward the people you encounter, especially when you find suffering and notice the impact. Apply self-compassion when you feel sorrow or anguish for yourself or any difficult emotion, take a moment to be mindful. Reflect on the thousands of people who are feeling the exact same thing at this moment, Silently send the phrases to everyone, including yourself.
- **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.
- **Mindfulness & compassion are undertaken one step, one person, one moment at a time.** Without this understanding we become overwhelmed by all the problems & suffering worldwide. Every conscious act no matter how small contributes to the healing of the whole. Remember we are not in charge, And it is never too late to begin again!- We can only begin now, where we are & now plants the seeds for all that lies ahead. This caring, tenderness love, grows out of practice- whether it is for a child, parent, neighbor, institutional racism, climate change- each action, each step is like breathing, a practice of the heart.
- **Our capacity to be a cause of suffering and our capacity to end suffering live within us.** The invitation is to nurture all that contributes to the end of suffering. **Try a few of these in the moment & see what you learn:** Can you transform your heart and mind in the moment? Can you understand the transparency of division & separation? Can you liberate your heart from ill will, fear, cruelty? Can you find the steadfastness, patience, generosity, and commitment not to abandon anyone or anything in this world? Can you learn how to listen deeply with the heart of compassion?
- **Instead of recognizing the differences between yourself and others, try to recognize what you have in common.** At the root of it all, we are all human beings. We need food, and shelter, and love. Reflect on the commonalities you have with every other human being, and ignore the differences. Below is a five-step exercise to try when you meet friends and strangers.
 - **Step 1:** “Just like me, this person is seeking happiness in their/his/her life.”
 - **Step 2:** “Just like me, this person is trying to avoid suffering in their/his/her life.”
 - **Step 3:** “Just like me, this person has known sadness, loneliness & despair.”
 - **Step 4:** “Just like me, this person is seeking to fill their/his/her needs.”
 - **Step 5:** “Just like me, this person is learning about life.”

6) ****Compassion Phrases:** Pick from below, create your own, use one word, or the essence of Compassion. A traditional order might be: someone experiencing difficulty, oneself, a benefactor, a dear friend, a neutral person, a difficult

person, and all beings.

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

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 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

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.