

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

Please Have FUN with the Home practices & your buddy groups-**Next class 7/10/26.**

- 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 mediation session to noticing any joy, ease, delight, gratitude wellbeing, contentment that arises in your formal practice How does this affect your daily life?**
- 2) **Gratitude Practice:**  
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.** (at the end of this home practice)
- 4) **\*\*\*Appreciative Joy or Mudita-** is the third of the four divine abodes, or boundless qualities of the heart. The Pali word is mudita. Joy gladdens our hearts and eases our minds. It has the flavor of delight, wonder, happiness. Appreciative joy is cultivating the ability to rejoice in the happiness, good fortune, positive qualities of others and yourself. The traditional example of Mudita is the attitude of a parent observing a growing child's accomplishments or successes. It means to feel delight for the happiness in people's lives. Next month we will practice a step-by-step sequence with phrases.

**The practice of mudita may be the most challenging of all of the brahmavihara practices,** because our mental reactions of comparing (better than, same as, less than), judging, envy, greed, and demeaning ourselves or others can feel so "natural." Though public discourse often reinforces this, we can go against the stream—let go of guilt about our own happiness or feeling threatened about its loss, use mind states of delight, gratitude, contentment, compassion to help diminish the suffering of attachment or aversion and open the heart to joy.

**Mudita cultivates appreciative joy at the success and good fortune of others.** We can also interpret mudita more broadly as an inner spring of infinite joy that is available to everyone at all times, regardless of circumstances. Celebrating and wishing for the happiness of others or our own, is boundless. **As the Dalai Lama advises, if our happiness is linked to the happiness of others, it multiplies our chance of happiness and connectedness by 8.3 billion!** 😊 (just saying)

**Get to know Joy & what brings you Joy** There are numerous ways to experience joy. One of the wonders of being alive is that we can take delight in so many ways. They all seem to rest on one thing: the ability to receive. To feel joy we must be willing to allow ourselves be touched by life, to let things in. Receiving has qualities of openness & connection. It takes practice to find the good, to let it in & to remember joy. Joy is our hearts capacity to celebrate.

- Nature is a great ally in Joy!
- Mindfulness invites us to investigate all the moments where there is no joy.
- Foundations of joy are **Integrity**-living a life of non-harming, **Gratitude**- taking delight, feeling joy & wonder, **Appreciation**-to see anew with wonder in the

moment with mindfulness, and **Contentment**-the heart-mind that is at ease within itself- the art of resting within .

5) **\*\*\*JOY: Reflections & Practices Talk over with Buddies**

- **Reflect on:** *What helps you feel ease, contentment or joy? What are the activities that most easily bring you joy? Is it some kind of physical activity? Are you more likely to feel joy when you are with others or when you are alone? Do you experience joy that is not dependent on any particular activity? If so, what conditions bring about that joy? How easy is it for you to be in touch with the sources for your joy?*
- **Practice:** *Recollect when you felt the greatest sense of well-being, joy or contentment. Is there a consistency to the rhythm of your sense of well-being on most days; e.g. do you consistently feel the most ease in the morning or evening? Or does your sense of well-being depend mostly on the activities you're doing? If possible, try meditating at different times in the day; e.g. early morning, lunch time, early evening or late evening. Is there a time of day when you feel more of a sense of well-being and ease in your meditation?*
- **Reflect on:** *How do you know when you have a sense of well-being, contentment or joy? Is it more of a physical sensation or a mental sensation for you? How is feeling joyful different than feeling ill-at-ease or uncomfortable? What affect does joy have on you? What happens to your thinking and level of pre-occupation when you are joyful?*
- **Practice:** *Spend more time than you normally would with activities that support a feeling of well-being or joy. Notice how your body feels when you feel content or satisfied. Also notice your mind state and emotional state when you have this feeling. Is the feeling of joy consistent or does it fluctuate?*

**Extra Credit -Practice: Appreciative Joy & Mindfulness:** *Joy has its roots in Mindfulness, which opens us to the world of the present, the world of this moment. Mindfulness is an intimacy with all things. With Mindfulness we simply learn to make room for joy, learning to see, listen, attend to all things with a spacious heart. For us to be deeply touched by anything in this life requires intimacy. With that closeness, we can feel a sense of appreciation, connectedness, thankfulness, wonder in the present moment, **See if that is true!***

6) **\*\*\*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 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.

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR PRACTICE- SENDING LOVE TO ALL!**