

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

**Please Have FUN with the Home practices & your buddy groups- No class in August!**

**Next class 9/18/26. “See you in September” ... en-JOY the summer & practice!**

- 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. **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?** *Other suggestions in reflections & practices.*
- 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. **(Gratitude is part of Joy)**
- 3) **\*Read the Brahmavihara info once a day.** (placed at the end of this home practice)
- 4) **\*\*\*Appreciative Joy or Mudita-** Joy gladdens our hearts, eases our minds. It has the flavor of delight, wonder, happiness. Appreciative joy is the happiness that comes from delighting in other people's well-being, joy or good fortune. Near enemy-exuberance. Far enemy-envy.  
Mudita is an inner spring of infinite joy that is available at all times, regardless of conditions.  
Offering the intentions of mudita helps you uncover thoughts, attitudes and emotions.  
Since we have explored mudita, it's allies and its obstacles – use the meditations to practice what you have learned. Remember to reside in the divine abodes, you need to apply what you have learned. The meditations and practices will help you in this process of appreciative joy.  
**Some Joy Phrases:** As you say the phrases, delight in the intentions, in the thoughts. Remember that mudita is appreciative joy. Gently move through the sequences of people.  
**One Path:** Reflect on the Gratitude you have and the joy you have in your life. Next is the easiest person-(examples: a friend, child, loved one who is enjoying some happiness, or some good fortune or a source of joy in their life), benefactor, neutral person, difficult relationship or someone you envy, all beings  
**Smaller Path:** Reflect on the Gratitude you have and/or the joy you have in your life. Next is the easiest person-(examples: a dear friend, who is enjoying some happiness, or some good fortune or a source of joy in their life), Next is someone you envy. Last is all beings  
**Classic Path:** Start with the easiest person (a loved one who is enjoying some happiness, or some good fortune or a source of joy in their life or good friend, Next is a benefactor, neutral person, difficult relationship or someone you envy, and all beings ( in this path, you do not include yourself)

May your happiness and good fortune not leave you.  
May your happiness not diminish. May your good fortune continue.  
May you/ dwell in happiness.

May your happiness increase / not leave you / never cease.

May your happiness/success continue, may it increase, may it never end.  
Your happiness/success/joy makes me happy.

How wonderful you are in your being  
I delight you are here  
I take joy in your good fortune  
May your happiness continue

#### 5) **Recollect the Foundations of Appreciative Joy or Mudita**

- Integrity- non-harming
- Appreciation- connected to reclaiming the capacity see anew –to get to know wonder is the capacity to take delight, to let ourselves feel wonder. The gift of the present moment
- Gratitude is the capacity to take delight, to feel wonder. Our life is the gift of many lives
- Contentment is a heart that is at ease, peace with itself. The conditions, circumstances don't have to be perfect to know contentment—the art of resting within is contentment. Contentment is not the absence of the challenging and the difficult- but the absence of our resistance or argument with the challenging or the difficult. Ask yourself: What is lacking in this moment? What is being asked of me for contentment to be present?

#### 6) **\*\*\*FUN PRACTICES:**

- **What ignites Joy in you?** *Joy is our hearts capacity to celebrate-*
- **Find Little Blessings Everywhere:** *Count your blessings everyday*
- **Whenever you pass others** *walking, biking, driving: Wish them happiness!*
- **Thank someone everyday!**
- **Celebrate what is right in your life:** Rejoice in the bright moments of joy- Simple joys that are unfolding for us moment by moment.
- **Spend sometime** aimlessly wandering while walking in nature. Walk wherever you want to and pay attention to your senses.
- **Nature is an ally** in teaching us the wonder of joy.
- **Notice** smiles, flowers, bunnies, bees, listen to the birds & children laughing.
- **Every time** you open to or return to the present moment- Delight-
- **Find a way to** bring laughter into your daily life.

7) **\*\*\*JOY: Reflections & Practices Talk over with Buddies (you have 2 months-reflect and practice different ones)**

- **Reflect on:** Easy ways that you can increase the frequency and amount of joy during your daily life. Create a list of them. What are some of the easy ways you can avail generate more delight? What are some of the obvious occurrences in your daily life, which you often overlook, that would bring some degree joy if you noticed?
- **Practice:** Spend more time than you normally would doing a hobby or activity that requires you to be focused and engaged. Notice the sense of well being you have before, during and after being absorbed or engaged in an activity. When did you feel the most ease? Notice whether you have any beliefs, judgments about or resistance to the activity and notice how that mind-set affects your feeling of contentment or well-being.
- **Reflect on:** How is your sense of wellbeing when you are completely present in the moment?
- **Practice:** Spend experiment with applying more presence, more joy to your life. This can be done by applying more ease, more presence during particular daily life activities; e.g. while brushing your teeth or doing the dishes. Notice whether your sense of contentment or well-being increases or decreases when you're present.
- **Reflect on:** Your formal meditation practice. Do you find that contentment or joy arises? How can you tell whether you are creating conditions for joyfulness or repressing joy due to an underlying belief that joy should not be experienced in practice?
- **Practice:** Just before meditating, reflect on those things that inspire your practice. In the course of your formal meditation, notice any feelings of joy, well-being or pleasure that occur. Be sensitive to the physical sensations that come with the joy. Allow yourself to enjoy those feelings. Gently, patiently, let those feelings grow as you continue your meditation. After the mediation, briefly reflect if there is a relationship between your daily behavior & the experience of joy in your meditation.
- **-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 it's true!**

8) **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
- **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.