

The Four Immeasurables

Meditation on Equanimity

Take nine deep relaxation breaths with long exhalations.

For the first three breaths, breathe in and bring the breath to any tension in the body, releasing the tension with the exhalation.

For the second three breaths, inhale into any emotional tension, feel where you hold it in your body and release it with the exhalation.

And, lastly, breathe into any mental tension. Feel where you hold nervousness, worries, or mental blockages in your body and release them with the exhalation.

Generate a heartfelt motivation to practice for the benefit of one's self and all beings.

We do this meditation with our eyes closed.

Take three people in your life.

On your left, place a beloved or a good friend, someone you really like.

In front, place a neutral person, or someone you ignore or don't notice. Someone who is in your life but you don't really feel one way or another about. You don't connect with them very much.

On your right, place an enemy or a difficult person, somebody that you have energy around now or someone you have had challenged with in the past. This could be someone you are holding a grudge against that you don't see anymore, but you have them on your list of those you don't like or don't want to have anything to do with.

The person on your left is someone you feel close to and unequivocally like or love. In front of you is the neutral person that you don't really care about one way or another. On the right is an enemy or difficult person.

Let's start with the person you dislike and notice how you feel about them:

- Physically
- Emotionally
- How you feel about how they look, their appearance
- How they move
- Their voice
- Their political views
- Their energy

Think about how your aversion to them developed. Think about what they did to you. How you found them irritating. Really get a felt sense of this energy that you feel towards them.

With an enemy, we often carry them with us for years. Even if we haven't talked to them for years, we are still carrying this feeling. Feel how it is to have this relationship with them.

Keep that awareness of them and feel like they are sitting right next to you. Like you have the feeling that you wish they weren't sitting so close.

Keeping that feeling, then feel on your left side the one you love or like. Notice how you feel about them:

- Physically
- Emotionally
- How you feel about how they look, their appearance
- How they move
- Their voice
- Their political views
- Their energy

Feel that closeness you have with this person and the desire to have them close. Maybe it is even a longing or craving for that person. Or maybe it is just a nice feeling of love and comfort. Really feel how that is.

Then think about your relationship with them and how your love or attraction to them developed. Think about how good they have been to you, how they supported you, all the reasons why you feel this way about them.

In front of you, see the neutral person, but as you shift your attention, really feel the aversion on your right and the attraction on your left. Feel these presences vividly.

Now, see the person in your life whom you don't have a strong connection with, whom you neither like nor dislike, whom you don't really pay much attention to.

Notice how you feel about this person:

- Physically
- Emotionally
- How you feel about how they look, their appearance
- How they move
- Their voice
- Their political views
- Their energy

Really feel this "not caring" energy you have towards them, not making any particular effort to get to know them. You are really liking or disliking them. Feel this kind of disconnected feeling.

Now, beginning with the person for whom you have an aversion, try to first neutralize that aversion. Don't try to like them, per se, just relax the negativity.

Think now about how this person has actually been a parent to you... Someone who has been very kind to you at some point. Now, recognize their suffering and confusion and how they have acted this way towards you which has resulted in this negativity, and how this is created by their confusion. In that way, develop a feeling of willingness to feel some compassion towards them and release this negativity, feeling some compassion and love.

On the left side, feel the person that you are very attracted to and try to release the craving aspect or the desire to be close to them. Just allow them to be in their own dimension, to be free. They still have all their qualities but you are not trying to magnetize them towards you. You have love and compassion for them but are releasing the pull of wanting them closer.

Now, move on to the neutral person and really connect to them. Feel an interest in them. A presence, allowing them to be in your awareness and feeling they have also been as intimate as a parent or a beloved to you, that you care about them.

Feel a kind of sharpening of awareness, a real feeling of not spacing them out, but really being present. Now, emanate out to all of them a feeling of equanimity and impartiality. Let go of passion, aggression, and ignorance in relation to them. Feel love for all three of them, an open impartial love that does not have self-interest in it. This is coming from your heart and bodhicitta, the awakened heart-mind.

Extend this out to all the people here in this room together. And all of the non-people that are in this room and on this land, all of the little animals and insects that are around us. Feel that impartial presence and love.

Gradually extend this out to encompass all beings including yourself, equanimity towards yourself and all beings.

Now, recall other people who are either enemies or friends, or you have no relationship with them, and as they come to mind, release them into this experience of impartiality and equanimity.

Make this impartiality immeasurable.

Dedicate the merit.

As you open your eyes, notice if you feel different somehow.



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