

MEDITATIONS 1 & 2

MEDITATION 1: FIELD OF CARE

1) **Abdominal breathing.**

- Sit in a relaxed way, with back comfortably straight, eyes gazing gently downward.
- Come down from the thinking mind into the body.
- Let the breath settle into its own natural rhythm while breathing into the abdomen so you feel it expand on each inhale. Feel the abdomen expanding and contracting with each breath.
- Let that feeling draw you into it more and more, breath by breath.

2) **Field of Care:**

- Bring to mind your field of care: your caring moment, benefactor, or spiritual field. Bring this to mind not just as a memory or an abstraction, but as happening right now present here with you now. You are being seen as deeply worthy of love and care, beyond judgments.
- Relax into the felt sense of this experience, steeping in its loving energy, feeling its tender qualities, and letting them infuse your whole being. Accept this loving energy and its qualities into your whole body and mind—into every part of your body, into every layer of feeling and emotion. As if every part of you is loved in its very being.
- Let any pattern of thought or feeling that arises during this meditation be gently embraced in the spacious warmth and acceptance of this field of care. Let any such pattern have all the space it needs within this field of care to relax, find its own place, and settle in its own time.
- If you lose the feeling of the loving quality, freshly recall your field of care as present here with you now, and let its loving power draw you back into the feeling of it.

2) Releasing:

- After a little while, just settle deeply into this felt sense of love, warmth, and acceptance. Let this help your heart and mind to just, relax, release all of its frameworks, and become completely open like space, beyond reference points. Let this total openness of awareness draw you into unity with it.
- Let any patterns of thought or feeling that arise just unwind and release within this utter openness, this space of deep allowing, by letting everything be.

Processing Meditation 1

- (1) Name a few of the loving qualities** that you experienced during step 2 of the meditation. This meditation helps us immediately start to access the loving qualities and dignity of our fundamental awareness, or buddha nature.
- (2) Identify a difficulty or problem** that came up for you during the meditation at some point, which signals how some part of you was reacting to the meditation. e.g.
- a part of you that wants to think about other things;
 - or a part of you that doubts any caring moment is good enough;
 - or a part of you that doesn't think that you deserve love;
 - or a part of you that wants to grieve the loss of someone brought to mind by your field of care.

"Part of you" refers to the sense of self that is operative in you at that moment, with its patterns of thought and feeling.

MEDITATION 2: BECOMING MORE DEEPLY RECEPTIVE TO LOVE AND COMPASSION

Preparing for Meditation 2

The next meditation uses the field of care to help us become increasingly receptive to the powers of love and compassion that are available in our underlying awareness. You will bring your field of care to mind, but this time, after you start to experience the loving qualities that come with that, notice when a part of you comes up that is reacting to the meditation as in the examples above (in “Identify a difficulty or problem”).

“Part of you” refers to the sense of self that is operative in you at that moment, with its patterns of thought and feeling.

When you notice that happening, let that part of you and its feelings be gently included within the spacious love, acceptance and compassion available within your field of care.

Those are the **three principles of receptive mode practice: accessing** awakening qualities of awareness with the help of your field of care, **noticing** when a part of you comes up that wants to think of other things, and gently **including** that part of you, that sense of self and its reactions, in the loving qualities of the field of care.

Meditation 2: Becoming More Deeply Receptive to Love and Compassion

1) Abdominal Breathing (As Described in Meditation 1)

2) Reconnecting with love:

- Now bring to mind your field of care: your caring moment, or benefactor, or spiritual field. Bring this to mind not just as a memory or an abstraction, but as happening right now, present here with you now. You are being seen as deeply worthy of love and care, beyond judgments.
- Relax into the felt sense of this experience, steeping in its loving energy, feeling its tender qualities, and letting them infuse your whole being. Accept this loving energy and its qualities into your whole body and mind—into every part of your body, into every layer of feeling and emotion. Every part of you loved in its very being.

- Feel the unconditional quality of this care.
- If part of you is having difficulty with this practice, or starts to draw your attention away, just settle back into your field of care and become compassionately aware of that part and its feelings in a fully allowing, spacious way. Let that part of you, and what its feeling, have all the space it needs within this field of care to find its own place and settle in its own time.
- If you lose the feeling of the loving qualities, freshly recall your field of care as present here with you now, and let its loving power draw you back into the feeling of it.

3) Releasing:

- After a little while, just settle deeply into this felt sense of love, warmth, and acceptance.
- Let this help your heart and mind to trust, relax, release all of its frameworks, and become completely open like space, beyond reference points.
- Let this total openness of awareness draw you into unity with it.
- Let any patterns of thought or feeling that arise just unwind and release within this utter openness, this space of deep allowing, by letting all be.

Processing Meditation 2–Five key learnings:

(1) This meditation purifies qualities of love and compassion toward greater unconditionality. We may start with an experience of relatively unconditional love, e.g., by reinhabiting a caring moment from our life, but its qualities become purified, stronger and more unconditional through the instruction (“Every part of you loved in its very being.”). This process brings out the unconditional capacity of love and compassion from our basic awareness, our buddha nature. From that secure base, we can bring greater unconditionality to others.

(2) The mind is learning that it does not have to be totally identified with any one part of ourselves, by letting each part (each sense of self) be embraced in the compassion of our fuller awareness, which is larger than any part. Our basic awareness is freed from being caught up in any one part, not by rejecting it, but by holding each part in compassion. This is called “unblending.”

(3) In this way, we begin to reunite with our fuller, basic awareness (buddha nature, the depth of our being), the larger awareness that can embrace all parts of us—all senses of self and feelings—in compassion without being completely identified with, or caught up in, any one part.

(4) As all parts of us feel the deep safety and healing power of such unconditional acceptance and care, **they can learn to trust the source of those loving qualities**, which is our basic awareness. As this trust deepens with repetition of practice, at the releasing phase of the meditation, the mind is willing to release more fully into the total openness, clarity, and warmth of our basic awareness, our true nature. This process of deepening trust and fuller release, reunifying with the openness and clarity of our deep nature, begins to draw us into the deepening mode of practice.

(5) Just as our basic awareness, when not identified with any one part, **can embrace all of our parts and feelings in unconditional care and compassion, the same awareness can hold others and their feelings in the same compassion**, without contributing to emotional exhaustion or “compassion fatigue.” The utter openness, clarity and compassion of our basic awareness is our ultimate secure base, from which to extend love and compassion to others sustainably and inclusively.

In Daily Life:

Do Meditation 2 first thing in the morning, however briefly, then reconnect with it briefly many times throughout the day, every day, over coming months. Each time you reconnect with this practice, make it a point to reaffirm that the loving energies and qualities you are experiencing are qualities of your own awareness. This helps you become increasingly conscious of how available these qualities are to you, whenever you remember to evoke them. To reconnect many times a day in little moments strengthens the neural pathways that support these experiential qualities, strengthening the secure base of love and compassion

that is needed for us to extend care, love and compassion more sustainably and inclusively to others in our lives and in our work.

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