

Transforming Problems

With the Four Immeasurable Thoughts

A workshop developed by Venerable Thubten Tenzin

The aim of the course is to gain an understanding of our interconnectedness and interdependence with others in order to make changes in our own lives in how we relate to others day to day.

The approach for this course is to use the meditations as a reflection exercise. For each one we begin with a short breath meditation to relax and calm the mind, and then read carefully through the meditations, reflecting on them, and seeing how they apply to our daily lives.

You will need a copy of *Buddhism: Ancient Medicine for Healing Modern Minds* by Venerable Tenzin, this is available as a downloadable PDF from our website

<http://www.tharpachoeling.org/teachings.html>

Or you can order a free physical copy also through our website.

If you have any questions related to the material, please contact our course coordinators via email at info@tharpachoeling.org or via the contact form on <http://www.tharpachoeling.org/contact.html>

May You Be Happy!

Part One

Please go to page 97 of Buddhism: Ancient Medicine for Healing Modern Minds and try the Simple Breath Awareness Meditation.

Then please contemplate the following taking time to reflect on each line:

True Equanimity Meditation by Venerable Thubten Tenzin

May all beings abide in equanimity, free of bias, attachment and anger.

All beings are equal, all want happiness – friend, enemy and stranger. Your prayer, and wish, and meditation is that you and others view all beings as being equal and that you and all others place beings in a state of impartiality, regardless of their colour, wealth, intellectual status.

We give them freedom from continual craving, desire and wanting.

We give them the freedom of contentment, happiness, refuge and safety.

Non-attachment

Non- Judgment

True letting go and loving all equally.

Accepting ourselves without conditions.

Giving ourselves and others the space to be happy or sad, to make mistakes and to be with the experience of this life.

Understanding these differences between us all and accepting that!

Equanimity – friend, enemy and stranger meditation

Visualise in front of you three persons: at the left a good friend, in the middle a stranger, to the right an enemy or someone you cannot stand.

- Concentrate on the friend in front and examine your feelings towards him or her.
- Now concentrate on the stranger and examine your feelings towards him or her.
- Now concentrate on the enemy and examine your feelings towards him or her.
- Return to the stranger and realise that this person can easily become your friend or enemy in the future.
- Next, look at the friend and realise that this person may become your enemy in the future when cheating or hurting you.
- Now, look at the enemy and realise that this person may become your friend in the future when helping you.
- Again look at your friend and try to strongly feel love and appreciation.
- Now look at the stranger and try to hold this feeling towards this person.
- Again look at your friend and try to strongly feel love and appreciation.
- Now try to hold this feeling while looking at the enemy; is it really impossible to feel some love and compassion for this person?
- Try to realise that all three, friend, stranger and enemy are completely equal in trying to become happy and trying to avoid suffering.

Affirmation

Please meditate on an affirmation related to equanimity that you will carry with you throughout the day, for example:

From today or for today I will try to see others as equal to me

Or

Today I won't judge myself or others harshly, understanding we all want happiness.



Part Two

Relaxation with the breath

Please go to page 97 of Buddhism: Ancient Medicine for Healing Modern Minds and try the Simple Breath Awareness Meditation.

Then please contemplate the following taking time to reflect on each line:

Offering Joy and Happiness Meditation by Venerable Thubten Tenzin

May all beings have happiness and the causes of happiness.

Meditate on the intention and capacity to offer joy and happiness to oneself and others.

We make an effort to be happy and peaceful, practicing contentment; safe and free from harm, neither giving harm or allowing ourselves to be harmed.

Understand others may have a skill, a method to bring happiness to others, to actualize loving-kindness that is not based in attachment - because attachment makes us try to control people, to manage and manipulate their emotions. It can and will cause suffering.

If we learn to not be emotive, but loving and kind we can truly give happiness to others.

Metta meditation.

Sit in a comfortable and relaxed manner. Take two or three deep breaths with slow, long and complete exhalations. Let go of any concerns or preoccupations. For a few minutes, feel or imagine the breath moving through the center of your chest - in the area of your heart.

Metta is first practiced toward oneself, since we often have difficulty loving others without first loving ourselves. Sitting quietly, mentally repeat, slowly and steadily, the following or similar phrases:

May I be happy. May I be well. May I be safe. May I be peaceful and at ease.

While you say these phrases, allow yourself to sink into the intentions they express. Loving-kindness meditation consists primarily of connecting to the intention of wishing ourselves or others happiness. However, if feelings of warmth, friendliness, or love arise in the body or mind, connect to them, allowing them to grow as you repeat the phrases. As an aid to the meditation, you might hold an image of yourself in your mind's eye. This helps reinforce the intentions expressed in the phrases.

After a period of directing loving-kindness toward yourself, bring to mind a friend or someone in your life who has deeply cared for you. Then slowly repeat phrases of loving-kindness toward them:

May you be happy. May you be well. May you be safe. May you be peaceful and at ease.

As you say these phrases, again sink into their intention or heartfelt meaning. And, if any feelings of loving-kindness arise, connect the feelings with the phrases so that the feelings may become stronger as you repeat the words.

As you continue the meditation, you can bring to mind other friends, neighbours, acquaintances, strangers, animals, and finally people with whom you have difficulty. You can either use the same phrases, repeating them again and again, or make up phrases that better represent the loving-kindness you feel toward these beings.

Metta meditation found here: <http://www.mettainstitute.org/mettameditation.html>

Affirmation

Please meditate on an affirmation related to Loving-kindness that you will carry with you throughout the day, for example:

Today I will practice patience with myself and with others.

From today I will send metta and arise compassion for the suffering of sentient beings.

Today onwards I will generate loving care for others more than myself – this would be a happy idea.



Part Three

Relaxation with the breath

Please go to page 97 of Buddhism: Ancient Medicine for Healing Modern Minds and try the Simple Breath Awareness Meditation.

Then please contemplate the following taking time to reflect on each line:

A Meditation on Compassion by Venerable Thubten Tenzin

May all beings be free from suffering and the causes of suffering.

Compassion is the intention and capacity to relieve and transform suffering.

The suffering of today; anger, fear, despair, hatred and confusion, worry and anxiety.

Helping oneself and others to be free from these sufferings by physical and mental means.

For example, physically: by participating in or running yoga classes, healthy classes, meditation or working with the breath.

Mentally: By connecting with others and doing ton-len (giving and taking meditation) practice or trying to cultivate compassion and not pity, which is the essence of superiority,

Trying to understand that we are all interconnected and make a connection with others, physically or mentally.

White Light of Compassion

Please turn to page 107 of Buddhism: Ancient Medicine for Healing Modern Minds and try the White Light of Compassion meditation.

Affirmations

Please meditate on an affirmation related to compassion that you will carry with you throughout the day, for example:

I can alleviate the suffering of others by offering service or help

Or

I will take away or help to lessen the suffering of my friend/partner/relative.

Or

I will help a stranger with a happy smile and wish them to be well and happy

For example.



Part Four

Relaxation with the breath

Please go to page 97 of Buddhism: Ancient Medicine for Healing Modern Minds and try the Simple Breath Awareness Meditation.

Then please contemplate the following taking time to reflect on each line:

Meditation to Place all Beings in Joy and Happiness by Venerable Tenzin

May all beings never be separated from the happiness of higher rebirth and the bliss of liberation.

To place all beings in unlimited joy is to show liberation/freedom from the suffering nature of conditioned existence.

Helping to see the freedom of our true joyful everlasting nature

Helping ourselves and others to live in peace and wellbeing is to know there is so much contentment

So much more than this short life

To find joy in a method and a way to be free now and in the future.

To be contented in the mind now makes the causes for future happiness and joy.

Meditation on the Cultivation of Joy by Venerable Tenzin

We choose one person and we consider how we feel about that person

If we love and respect this person we can feel and genuine wish that they be happy, well and at ease.

If we genuinely care from the depths of our heart we will feel joy at the connection, we will feel happy that we can depend on them, that they are in our life, that they share a life experience and that they have been kind, loving and compassionate to us.

We will then give rise to joy, this feeling can motivate our own wellbeing and happiness and once again they have been unbelievably kind.

The feeling of joy could be extended to others, reaching out, broadening our view to incorporate love and respect for the people who try to benefit and not harm, who have a considered kindness for other welfare.

This joy is also a great antidote to jealousy and can be a cause for us to delight in virtue.

We should try to recall this joy we experience and feel that it adds to our own comfort and wellbeing.

It can give confidence to help and respect others, telling only the truth, speaking kindly and meaningfully and protecting them.

We should consider the points even when we leave the meditation.

Thank you.

Affirmations

Please meditate on an affirmation related to compassion that you will carry with you throughout the day, for example:

When I compare I think I am superior, may I think instead of equanimity, love and compassion

Or

May I place myself and others in the state of liberation and lasting happiness free from all pain

Or

May I offer by way of the truth complete freedom from suffering.

