

MODULE 1: LOVING KINDNESS

SESSION TWO: Learning to love ourselves



TEACHING 1: Introduction to the Practice of Loving Kindness - Sharon Salzberg

Key Points

- With Loving Kindness, rather than gathering our attention on the breath, we gather our attention on the Loving Kindness phrases – e.g. May you be happy, may you be well.
- Often, when we pay attention to ourselves, we tend to dwell on the negatives.
- The process of loving kindness is a stretch. Our cultural conditioning means that we are likely to come to the end of the day, and think of something that went wrong. So it is a stretch, an expansive exercise. a conscious, intentional exercise not to deny the difficulties, the conflicts.
- We go over the same list of negativity about others ... what's wrong with them. So we stretch ... think of anything 'right' about this person. If you can't think of anything, we remember that all beings want to be happy.
- We often have a mistaken notion of where happiness is to be found, but actually people want to be happy.
- Loving Kindness is an intentional exercise
- How fully we are paying attention, how complete a connection is there. We pay attention in a complete wholehearted way, rather than a half-hearted way, instead of pre-judging others as irrelevant.
- Most of the time, we're not listening ... what's it like to intentionally listen to others.
- We have so much capacity to step out of our habitual way of looking at ourselves and others, and to include, to wish well, not to be so caught up in our own stuff. And that's the practice of loving kindness.



TEACHING 2: The importance of LK practice: Learning to love ourselves – Sogyal Rinpoche

Main points

- One of the problems in the West is that we do not know how to love ourselves. So we need to build our confidence, and actually discover who we really are.
- In fact, one of the reasons why we find it so important to have someone to love us is that we don't know how to love ourselves.
- The solution to this problem is simple: develop the love and trust in yourself, so that you can become confident and mature as a person. This is why loving kindness practice is so important.
- We don't know how to love ourselves.
- In Tibet, families are be a good support system for developing self-esteem.
- We misinterpret the teachings. 'Don't cherish ego' doesn't mean 'Cherish self at the expense of others' or 'Don't cherish self by having low self-esteem'.
- We need to build confidence in ourselves by truly getting to know ourselves. Loving kindness practice helps develop this confidence.
- One of the reasons we look for someone to love us is that we can't find that love inside ourselves. We want somebody else to give us love and confidence. The best solution to this problem is to find that love within ourselves, to become our own lover.



DURING THE WEEK

- Continue to reflect on the insights you have from the session
- Nurture your sense of well being through shamatha practice to connect with your Buddha Nature
- Practice loving kindness for yourself. (The practices from last week and this week will be sent to you in the email after the session.)
- Practicing in a group is a wonderful support to your practice.

Note: Consider participating in the 20 minutes a day Shamatha practice (at 8am everyday) and/or the Loving Kindness practice (6.00pm Monday and Wednesday)



Suggested Reading during the week

Sogyal Rinpoche, Tibetan Book of Living and Dying, Chapter 5 - Bringing the Mind Home
Sharon Salzberg, Loving Kindness: The Revolutionary Art of Happiness, Chapter 2