

## **Meditation 2 week 2**

### Introductions

In 3s discuss what did last week how you have got on meditating during the week.

Questions?

Reminder of what we did last week:

- setting up as preparation to meditation

How do we set up for metta bhavana?

- developing contentment, confidence and enthusiasm
  - can develop enthusiasm by reflecting on why meditate
  - can develop confidence by reflecting on what have learned and how you are benefiting
  - can develop contentment by reflecting on what appreciating
- kind awareness
- thinking of what people to choose
- choosing way to practice in the meditation
- remembering our intention
  - On flip chart make list of positive qualities which can be enhanced by this meditation

**Do metta bhavana meditation with set up going through these points**

### **Balancing effort**

The theme for today is balancing active and receptive effort.

Meditation can be divided into four types, which are also ways of working:

- concentrative – focus and sustain attention on chosen object, being active
- receptive – where don't make any particular effort and are just open to your experience
- generative – bringing something into being
- reflective – contemplating a theme such as interconnectedness

These are all present in all meditations, but the emphasis changes. We shall be looking at the first two ways.

Like getting to know someone,

- active by asking questions
- and receptive by listening to the answers.

The same sort of dialogue can go on within ourselves.

Like taking dog for a walk:

- can go on a tight lead so always walks at your heel
- or on a long lead so can explore a bit more

Can make the wrong type of effort. Imagine that have a plant that is wilting. Can try to make it grow straight by pulling it upwards, but will flop again as soon as you let go. Better way is to make sure that it has enough water and sunlight.

Can also make too much effort. Story of disciple of Buddha, Sona whose feet were bleeding because he was doing so much walking meditation. Sona wondered about giving up the spiritual life because he wasn't making progress. The Buddha told him about tuning a lute.

We are going to experiment with being more active and more receptive while being mindful of the breath.

How to go about it:

- **Active**
  - wise use of discipline
  - object is to gain more control of the mind
  - actively follow the sensations of the breath from where it enters your nostrils down through your chest into your tummy and back up and out again
- **Receptive**
  - Letting things be without changing them
  - Settling the mind in its natural state without wanting it to be different
  - Like watching a wild animal or bird. Just watch what is happening.
  - Having curiosity, kindness and appreciation of your experience
  - Sometimes use the image of watching your experience like watching clouds float across the sky

Any questions about how to do this?

Experiment with being as active as possible and as receptive as possible. 4 minutes alternating being active for 30 seconds then being receptive for 30 seconds.

Feedback on people's experiences.

Exploring balancing the two ways of working:

- If too active can be too tight and impose our idea of breathing
- If too receptive can become caught up in wandering thoughts
- Like tuning a musical instrument

When setting up then making an effort and then can relax when meditating.

Also can be helpful to deliberately change mode a bit during meditation as may have a tendency one way or the other.

Story about sometimes needing to turn right and sometimes needing to turn left.

**Mindfulness of breathing with receptive periods:**

- Actively aware of sounds, then letting sounds wash over you
- Actively aware of parts of the body, alternating with being receptive to the body
- Actively aware of emotions, then receptive
- Actively aware of thoughts, then receptive
- Aware of breath, then just relaxed and receptive – if time do all 4 stages with receptive period at end of each.