Meditation: Joy (Muditā) | Monday Night

Jack Kornfield · Notable Dhamma Teachers — Jack Kornfield · 29:30

Let's begin with some meditation.

Please find a way to sit, as I will, that is stable and comfortable and at ease—where your body can rest on the earth with some sense of alertness, but also a graciousness, like the king or the queen on the throne. You take your seat.

When you're ready for this time, let your eyes close gently, or at least lower your gaze considerably, and direct your attention—this gift of awareness—to notice just now, this moment, this present moment, the state of your body and mind and heart. Perhaps take a couple of very deep, long breaths in and out, and with each breath, release whatever obvious tension or tightness you can.

Now let's invite a deeper level of opening. Bring your attention to your eyes and face, and let the eyes and face be soft. Loosen the jaw. If you like, you can roll your head in a circle to release your neck and let it find a simple upright position. Let your shoulders relax and your arms and hands rest easily.

Feel the weight of your body now—buttocks and feet, the heaviness of gravity pulling you. Since you are met completely by the earth, by the chair, the floor, wherever you are, know that you are held by the earth. You can let go and be stable and steady just where you are on this earth in this moment, like a great tree. Let your belly be soft and the breath natural. Let the heart be soft as well, to receive whatever arises with kindness and compassion and tenderness.

Now, with this embodied presence, let's shift our attention. Tonight, the guided meditation will be one of muditā, or joy. We could pay attention more fully to our own breath and body and allow things to open and bloom like a flower with a kind attention—and you may be called to do that tonight on your own or at another time. For this evening, joy will be the topic, the theme, the energy.

As you sit now, gently letting the breath breathe itself and holding all the dimensions of your humanity—the ups and downs, the gain and loss—hold it all with a gracious heart.

Here is how to begin the practice of muditā, or shared joy. Let yourself think of someone who you care about quite a lot naturally, where there isn't a lot of conflict or difficulty. Picture them, remember them, see them in your mind's eye or hold them in your heart. When you think of this person for whom you naturally have affection, care, love, notice what happens as you bring them into your mind and heart. Perhaps a little half smile comes to your lips to see them.

Now let yourself imagine and picture their happiest moment as a child—running, tickling, laughing,

playing. Let yourself see or feel or imagine that child of the spirit. Every child has had it, no matter how difficult the upbringing. See their joyful moments, their happiest time.

As you sense and envision the most joyful moments of their childhood—just the simplicity of running and laughing, playing—begin to wish them well:

May you be joyful.
May you remember that child of the spirit that was born in you.
May your joy increase.
And may the causes for happiness and joy grow stronger in your life.

May you remember your joy.
May you be joyful, happy.
May you remember the child of the spirit that was born in you.
May your joy increase day by day, year by year.
And may the causes for your joy and wellbeing and happiness grow strong.
May you live in joy.

Notice what it's like to invite the quality of joy, of shared joy, with this person you care about—how it uplifts your own heart, how it opens you to joy.

Now pick another person that you care about, someone easy to think of and not conflicted. Visualize them, remember them. Bring them into your mind's eye and your heart. Again, with a little half smile, the delight of seeing them, about to wish them joy.

As you see them, picture again their happiest moment as a child—laughing, playing, running, teasing, tickling, joyful, delighted. The joy that was born in them.

May you be joyful.
May you remember your joy, the child of the spirit born in you.
And as the years go on, may your joy increase.

And may the causes for your happiness, well-being, and great joy increase and grow strong. See them as joyful.

And again, keeping the half smile on the lips, imagine these two dear ones, ones you care about, now gazing back at you. See their eyes looking at you, smiling. They wish the same for you. They see you with their eyes and their heart.

And they say, "Do you remember your best moments as a child? Laughing, playing, running, delighting. You can remember."

And they gaze at you and say, "May you be joyful." Take it in—their wish is for you. They say, "May you

remember your joyful spirit. May your joy increase over the years. And may the causes for your happiness and well-being and joy grow strong."

Here are these two gazing at you, wishing you so well, smiling with you. And you put your hand on your heart and you receive it and wish for yourself: May I be joyful. May I remember the joyful spirit born into me, the child of the spirit. And may the joy of my heart increase over the years. And may the causes of happiness and well-being and joy grow stronger in my life.

Rest in this field of joy—of these two that you love or care for and their care for you. Breathe gently in the space of joy. Feel it in your body and in your heart and mind, the sweetness of joy.

Now let yourself think of another person or two to whom you want to share and send the mudita of joy, of well-wishing. You'll know who. Let another person come to heart and mind. As you picture and remember and think of them, see them as a child—their best day, their most joyful spirit, their happiest time laughing and playing—and extend the well-wishing of joy: May you too be joyful. May you remember this spirit of joy born into you. And may your joy increase over the years. And may the causes for happiness and well-being and joy grow strong in your life so you live well and enjoy.

The birds are singing along with us their songs of joy and happiness, springtime.

Now let yourself imagine that your heart is like a lighthouse, a beacon, and you can shine from joy out with a half smile on your lips. The well-being of joy radiates in every direction to touch the beings around—yes, the birds and the animals, and yes, the humans, young and old and middle, all the human beings in their different stages of life—with this beautiful well-wishing: May you be joyful. May you remember your joyful spirit.

Send out across the world to your loved ones and friends, to beings across the earth, human and non-human: May your joy increase over the years. And may the causes for happiness and well-being and joy grow stronger and stronger in your life.

Sit now silently for a time. Radiate joy with a half smile on your lips and the well-wishing in every direction, or let different people come to mind and see their child of the spirit. Become the beacon of joy as you breathe in and out gently, as you rest in the joyful heart.

May you be joyful. May you remember your joyful spirit. May your joy increase over the years. And may all the causes for your happiness and well-being and joy grow stronger. May you live with a joyful spirit and a joyful heart.

When you're ready, let your eyes open gently.

This is one of the Brahmavihara, the divine abode practices—the practices of the awakened heart, shared joy. Remember it, use it, practice it when you will. Play with it, make it your own. Sometimes these words aren't the right ones, and you have to find that which invites your heart and your joy to open. It's there for

you. We'll talk more about it in a little bit.

[Note: This final section contains only the closing meditation guidance already present in the preceding context, followed by administrative/housekeeping content about breaks and support information. There is no additional dharma content to transform into written form.]

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