

Equanimity

Bhante Bodhidhamma · Tips of the Day · 2 min read

Equanimity is not the sort of word you hear very often. As for myself, I didn't really know what it meant. Something about balanced mind. In the Buddha's teaching, it is arguably the most important of all virtues. For sitting on the bed of equanimity, the other virtues are less likely to be corrupted into their direct or subtle enemies. And we are more likely 'to see things as they really are'. Every virtue has its opposite: love and hatred, generosity and greed, courage and cowardice and so on. And more subtle ones too: love and attachment, generosity and overly generous detrimental to oneself or the other or both: courage and fool heartedness. Equanimity is a quality we would expect of a judge. We don't expect them to get caught up in the clever arguments of the lawyers. The opinionated mind. We don't expect them to be persuaded by the baying the crowd. The emotional heart. They are to be impartial. We do not expect them to be angry with the criminal so clouding their sentencing. Or indeed fearful of possible reprisals from a guilty criminal on summing up and guiding the jury and eventual sentencing. They are not meant to come from a personal angle, but from the position of the law. So it is with equanimity in ordinary daily life. Do we know our biases. Do we only read, listen and talk to those who have the same. Do we take the position of 'I'm right'. Or more subtly 'we're right'. It always feels more right-eous when others agree with us. In a quiet moment when we can talk to ourselves truthfully, what do we really think about politics, sexual identities, religion and other questions of our time? And then how we really feel. Do they match up? Are there hidden darkneses we have kept secret even from ourselves. Little prejudices that our ideal sense of self has not really allowed accepted. 'If I thought that, it wouldn't be me.' From the position of the Dhamma, often translated as the Law, the Truth, what ought we to think and feel? Do we have the humility to accept that? So when are we equanimous? When we come into any given situation without prejudice, without fear, without anger and without preference. Mmmm. Well, that's where we are aiming. 388

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