

# Loving-kindness

Metta



# Loving-kindness

- Langer and Rodin (1977)
  - They performed an experiment in a nursing home.
  - Two floors of residents were selected.
    - They were all of similar physical and mental health, and socio-economic level.
  - They were given plants, furniture and a weekly movie.
    - On one floor the residents were given responsibility for taking care of the plants, arranging the furniture and selecting when to see the movie.
    - On the other floor, the care givers did it for the residents.
  - The researchers found that the residents with choice and responsibility said they were happier and felt healthier than the residents on the other floor did.
  - They also noticed that, after a year, only 15% of the residents on the floor with choice and responsibility had died while on the other floor 30% (the typical amount) of the residents had died.

# Results of the study

- The researchers concluded that choice and responsibility add to the health and quality of life for patients in a nursing home.
- I find it interesting that the researchers credited the benefits of taking care of plants to responsibility.
- I believe they neglected the emotional element of taking care of a living thing.
- When we take care of something else with no expectation of receiving something in return we not only help the object but we also are helping ourselves.

# Metta

- Metta comes from the Pali language.
- It can be translated as
  - Friendliness
  - Benevolence
  - Goodwill
  - Kindness
  - Sympathy
  - Active interest in others
  - Loving-kindness
- It is the topic of several of the Buddhist sutras.



# Loving-kindness

- It can be thought of as love and/or caring without attachment.
  - Non-attachment is a very important element in loving-kindness.
  - Many or even most of the relationships we call love are a kind of contract or currency.
    - I love you if you love me.
    - I love you if you do what I want.
    - I love you so you should make me happy.
  - These expectations and attachments damage both the relationship and ourselves.

# Benefits of Loving-kindness

- The Buddha said the benefits of loving-kindness are:
  - 1) You will sleep easily.
  - 2) You will wake easily.
  - 3) You will have pleasant dreams.
  - 4) People will love you.
  - 5) Devas [celestial beings] and animals will love you.
  - 6) Devas will protect you.
  - 7) External dangers [poisons, weapons, and fire] will not harm you.
  - 8) Your face will be radiant.
  - 9) Your mind will be serene.
  - 10) You will die unconfused.
  - 11) You will be reborn in happy realms.



# Why do loving-kindness meditation?

- Probably the most important reason is to strengthen your feeling of connectedness to all living beings and the entire universe.
- It also helps us in our daily relationships because we eventually come to realize the equal importance of ourselves and others.
- This includes the people we don't particularly like right now.
- We can develop open and loving hearts that will allow us to meet anyone with respect and appreciation.

# Loving-kindness Meditation

- The first step in loving-kindness meditation is to select someone (a sentient being).
- There are four levels of relationship.
  1. Self
  2. A benefactor (someone you have positive feelings for)
  3. A neutral person
  4. A difficult person
- 5. All four



# Loving-kindness Meditation

- Because we have hidden elements of attachment in most of our relationships, Andrew Weiss suggests meditating in this order.
- Yourself
- A neutral person
- Someone you like
- Someone you love dearly
- Someone you dislike or hate
  - (remember things we do not like about another person are usually things that we do not like about ourselves.)

# Loving-kindness Meditation

- May I be well and happy.
- May I be strong, confident and peaceful.
- May I have ease and well-being.
- 나는 건강하고 행복하기를
- 나는 힘이 있고 자신하고 평화롭기를
- 난 편하고 안녕하기를
- May (s)he be well and happy.
- May (s)he be strong, confident and peaceful.
- May (s)he have ease and well-being.
- 그(녀)는 건강하고 행복하기를
- 그(녀)는 힘이 있고 자신하고 평화롭기를
- 그(녀)는 편하고 안녕하기를

# Loving-kindness Meditation

- Start by connecting with your breath.
- Then start sending the wish to the object of your meditation.
- You can stop repeating the words after a while but continue focusing on sending the wish and grounding yourself with your breath.
- Do not force the emotion.
- Notice what comes up and enter into it.
- Notice how it changes as you continue.