Meditation Teacher Training Foundations

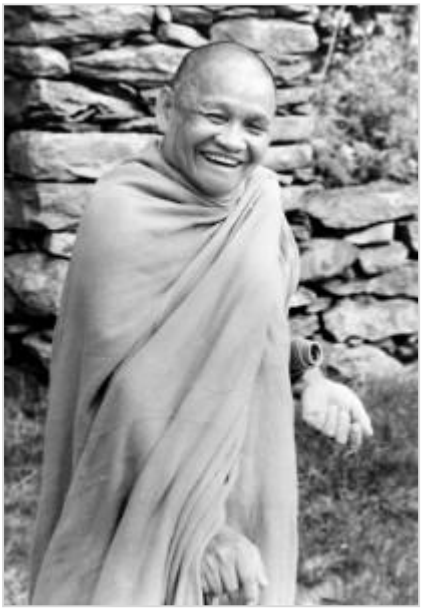
COURSE BOOK

/Healing With Insight

In gratitude to the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha, the source of these teachings and of much joy and growth in my life.

In gratitude to Venerable Phra Nick, who has helped review and develop this book.

In gratitude to Venerable Bhante Sujato and Venerable Phra Olarn who gave inputs to the 'Teaching Tips' section.



"Don't [consider yourself to] be anything at all,

if you [consider yourself to] be anything at all,

you will suffer"

~ *Venerable Ajahn Chah*

No Copyright:

Lots of love and work has gone in to this book, and I hope you use it in a way that brings happiness for all beings. You have permission to use this work in any way you feel. I would appreciate if you put a link to my page, but you are not obliged to.

Love and Light, 💗🙏

nishan disanayake

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Meditation Teacher Training Course ☺

This book is structured so as to be a useful reference for you in future, during the course we will go through it together with other activities in a different order.

The first section explains why, in the Buddha's teachings, spiritual growth and meditation can only develop upon the foundations of generosity and ethical conduct. Next is an explanation of key Buddhist principles for letting go of emotional pains and nurturing unconditional love.

The second section describes a series of meditation practices. Breath work brings deeper concentration, healing and happiness; which makes us better able to do the other practices. Feelings Insight meditation helps us to deepen our subtle awareness of our own feelings and accept them as they are, in this we can also realize and accept the changing nature of everything in the universe. Unconditional Love practice deepens our acceptance of our self and others and also brings happiness. The Healing meditations are a combination of feelings insight and unconditional love that helps to let go of large stored emotional pains. The Basic Mindfulness practice helps to enhance the effectiveness of all the other practices by recognizing whenever we get distracted during practice and returning to it; the Healing Mindfulness practice combines the Feelings, Love, and Healing principles into a powerful and deep practice that uses every experience in life and every movement of the mind as an opportunity to let go of pain and nurture love and happiness.

The third section helps with teaching and guiding others in their meditation and inner healing, firstly by describing key principles for the role of a guide in spiritual practice, based on input of three meditation teachers, and secondly through describing some practical tips.

Finally, the appendix provides resources for furthering your knowledge and practice, and some inspiring excerpts from the original Buddhist suttas.

A. PRINCIPLES

1. FOUNDATIONS FOR ONGOING HEALING AND GROWTH

"**Dana**mdadantusaddhaya,
Silamrakkhantusabbada,
Bhavanabhiratahontu,
Gacchantudevata' gata."

"May you practice generosity with conviction,
May you always maintain virtue,
May you delight in mind cultivation,
May you go on to the realms of angels."
~ Buddhist Blessing and Protection prayer

GENEROSITY (DANA) – GIVING YOUR TIME, ENERGY, MONEY, DESIRES

- **Life becomes easier and supports spiritual growth**
    - Receive kindness and support, and less outer conflict
- **Less inner conflict**
    - Moves focus away from our pains
    - Creates happiness and enhances self-respect, making looking inwards more pleasant
- **Physical practice of letting go**

VIRTUE [ETHICAL CONDUCT] (SILA)

– LIVING BY A SET OF ETHICS THAT REDUCE HARM TO SELF AND OTHERS

- **Life becomes easier and supports spiritual growth**
- **Less inner conflict**
    - Integrity enhances self-respect and reduces regrets and worrying, which makes looking inwards more pleasant
- **Deeper practice of letting go**
    - Integrity nurtures inner strength and acceptance regarding the outcome

MIND CULTIVATION [MEDITATION] (BHAVANA) – LOOKING INWARDS WITH ACCEPTANCE

CONDITIONS PRODUCE RESULTS:

- **Set a regular time for meditation, ideally in the mornings**
- **Use meditation recordings and apps**
- **Frequently look inwards during daily life and do the inner healing practice**

  Throughout each day, frequently look inwards for emotional pains and then do an inner healing or the 4Rs* (mindfulness) practice
- **Define common daily experiences as reminders to look inwards**
    - Mindfulness bell app
    - Before stepping through a door
    - The sound of a car passing
    - Receiving a call or text

PEOPLE MAKE PRACTICE EASIER:

- **Join a weekly group that does an inward-looking practice** that you like (e.g. – meditation, sharing on feelings, yoga, etc) – See links provided
- **Connect with people that regularly look inwards**
- **Listen to teachings** (recorded or live)

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* 4Rs (see p. 30)

- **Meet with a teacher**

CLEAR INTENTIONS

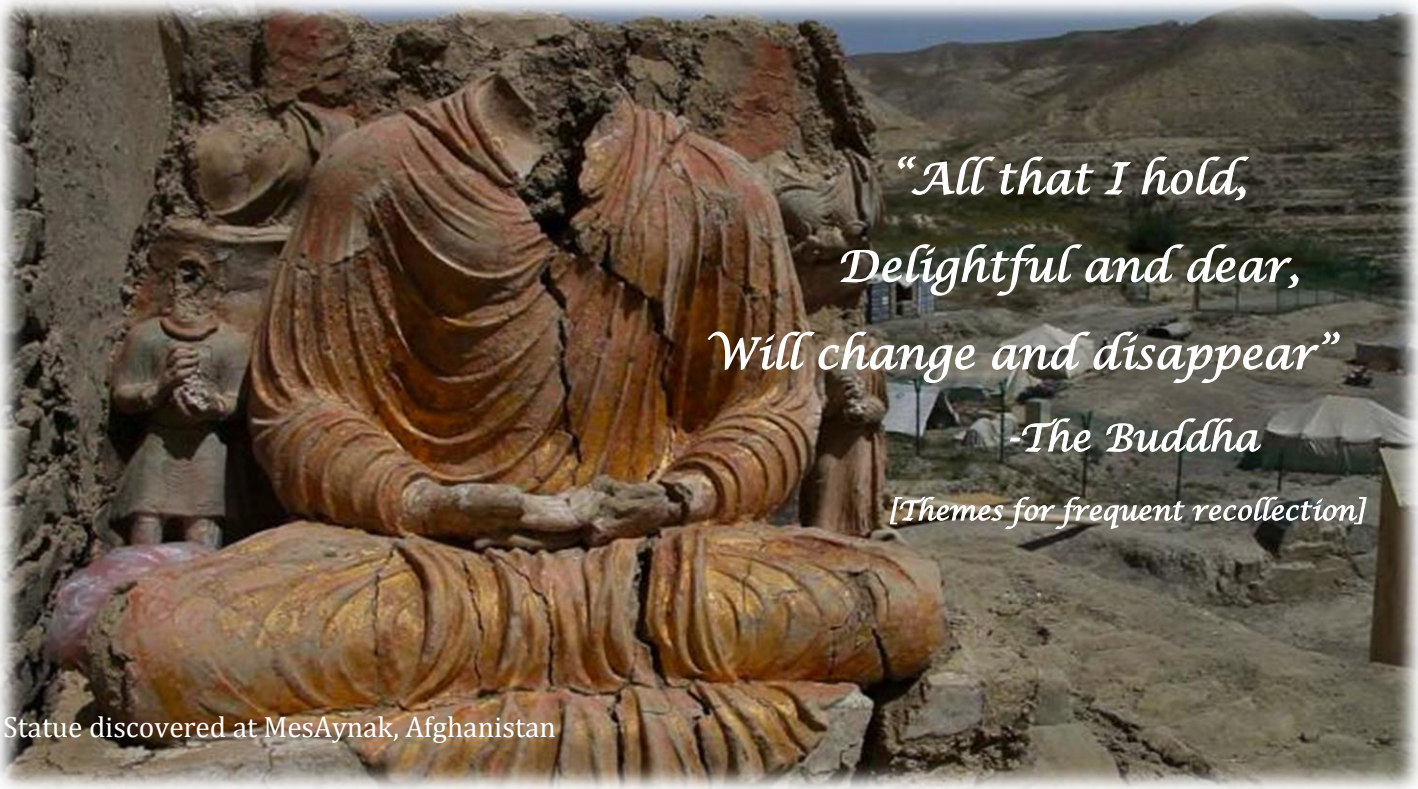
- Make a few **commitments** for your practice, and consecrate
- **Accept that you will fall back on your practice sometimes**, and each time is a wonderful opportunity to let go of the past and return to your practice
- **Define a review day** (or week) in the next couple of months, to reflect on your practice and commitments

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF EXISTENCE (TILAKKHANA)

- **Shift Happens *(Anicca)***

Everything is continuously changing, trees, flowers, the weather, and possessions like cars, our bodies, also our emotions.

- Next time you feel a strong painful emotion, think back on many different emotions you've felt in your life. Like the rest, this emotion will pass.

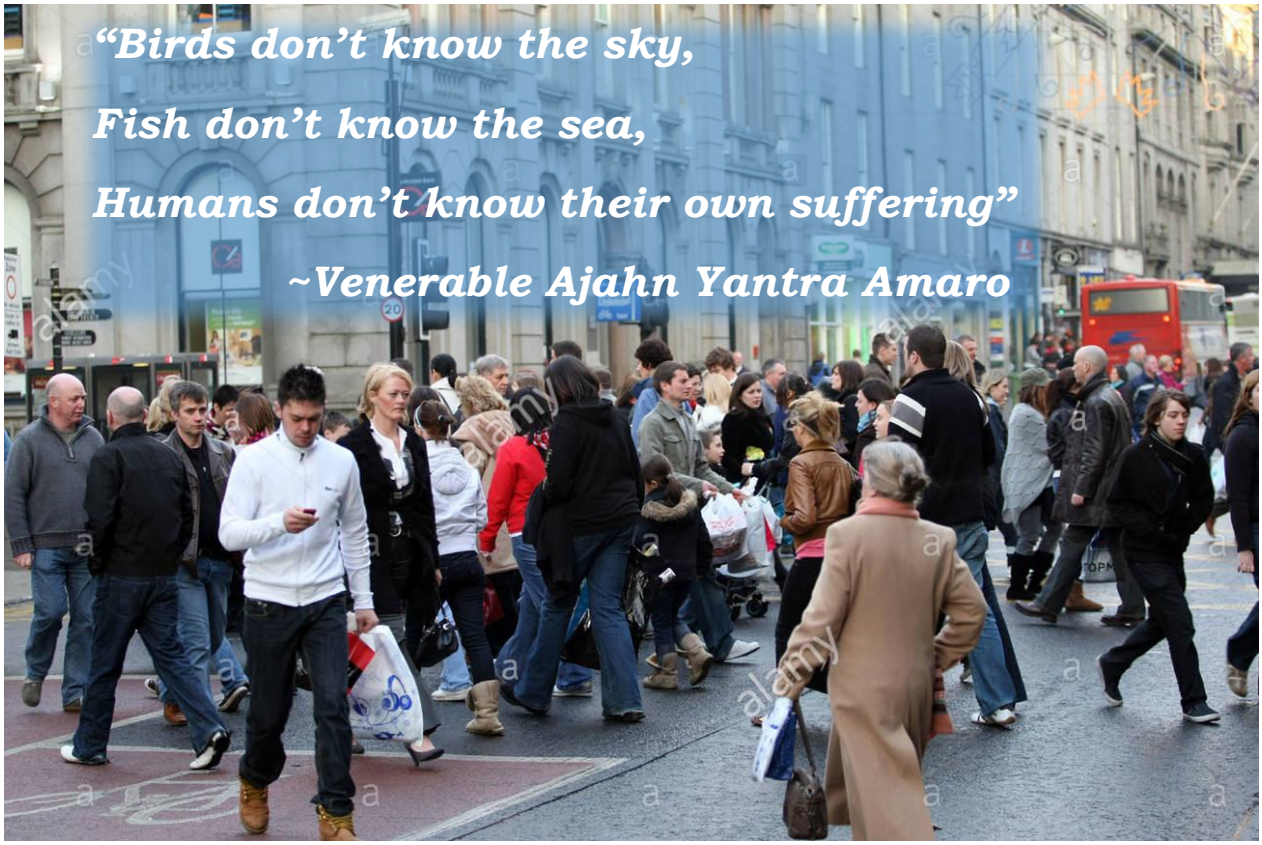


Statue discovered at MesAynak, Afghanistan

- **<u>Shit happens *(Dukkha)*</u>**

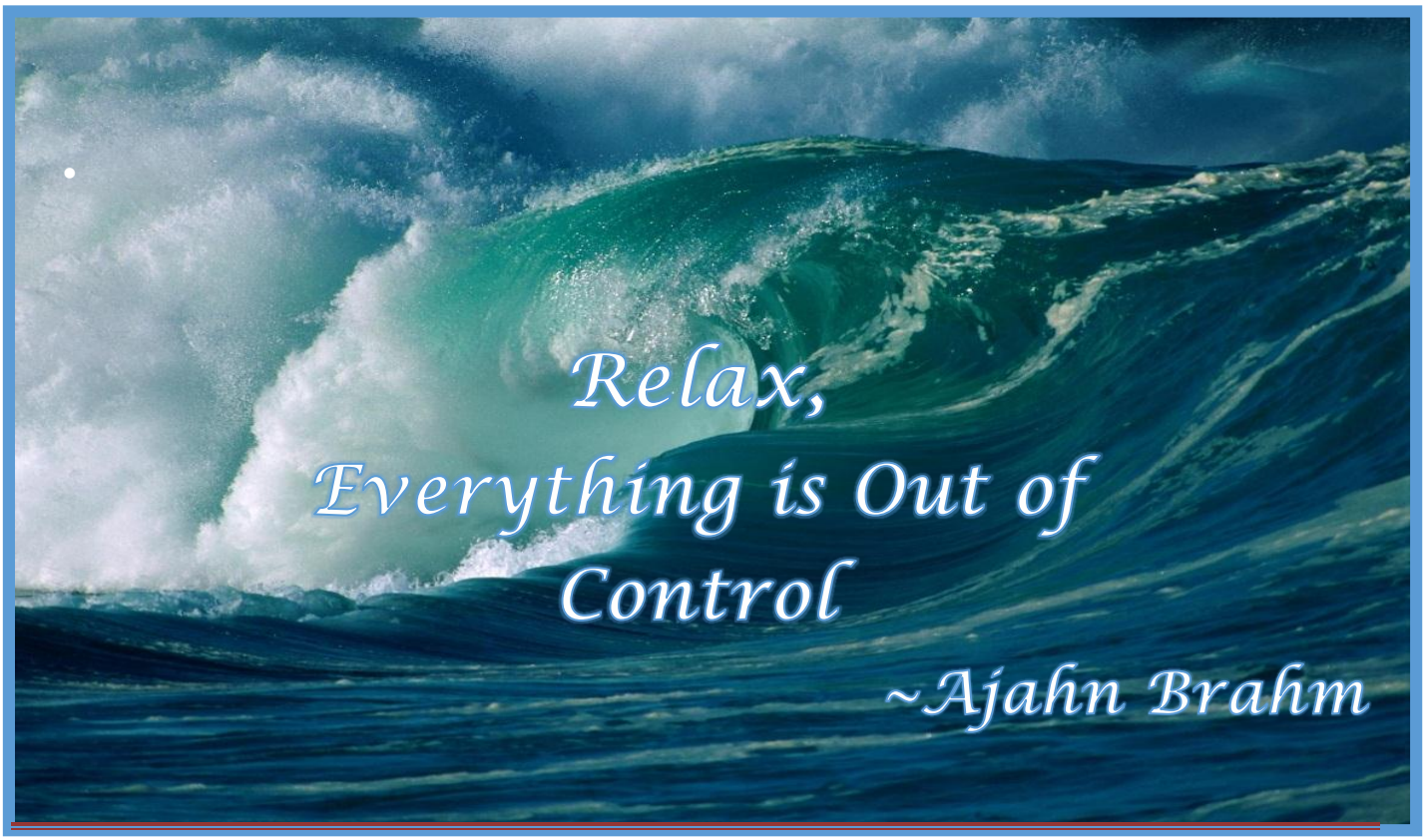
Emotional and physical pains and imperfections are part of life and part of the nature of the body and the mind.

- Experiencing painful emotions means you are totally normal

x 

➢ **No full control *(Anatta)***

- We did not ask for our pains, our painful beliefs or behaviors, it came from past experiences, often in childhood.
- We are not in full control of our body and mind states, we can influence them, but we cannot choose.
- Even though our actions are not within full control, they still lead to consequences.



➢ **Past and Future are uncertain (Anatta)**

- We can't choose what will happen in the future, and we don't know which possibility is actually good or bad.
- Memory of the past is highly unreliable.

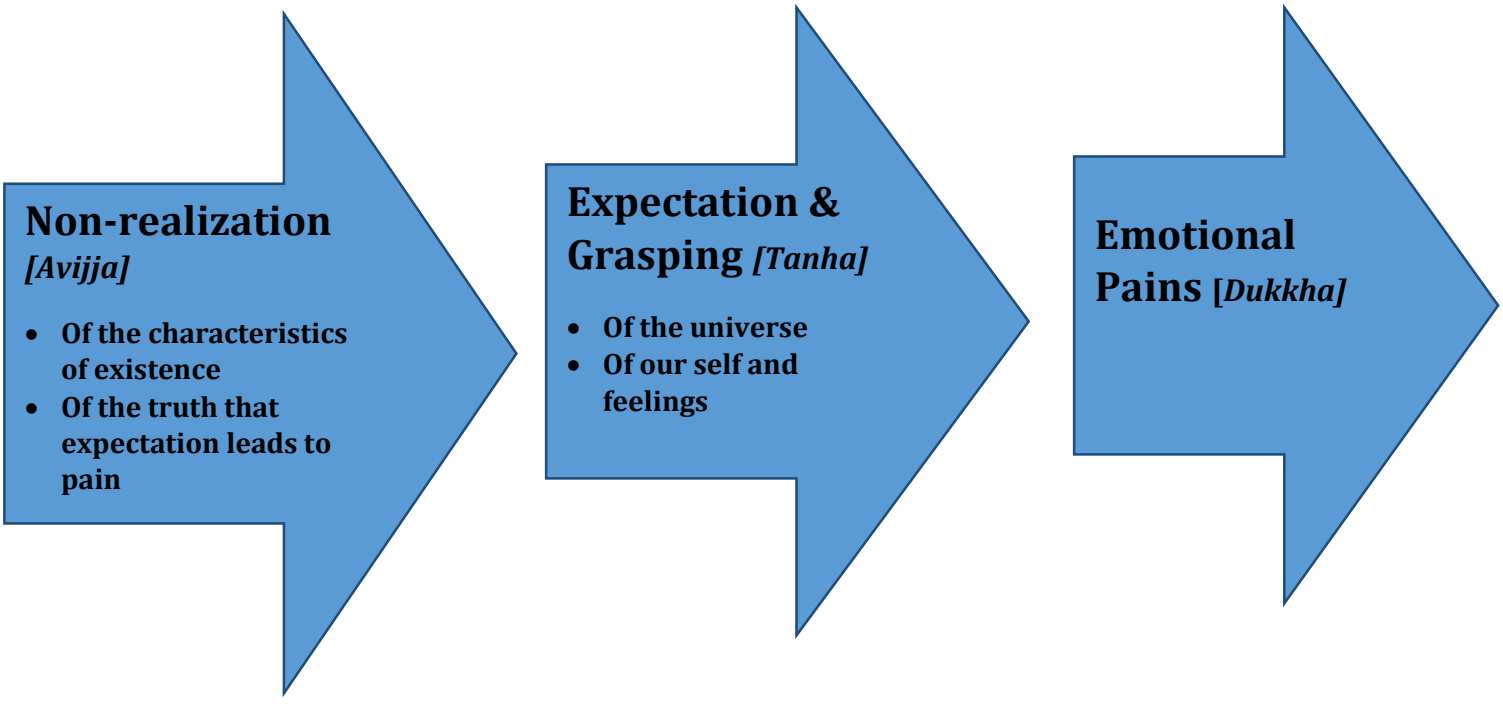
Based on the Buddhist Teachings of Dependent Origination (Patticasamudpada)

When we don't realize the three characteristics, we hold expectations

- Good things should never change, everything should be pleasant, I should be able to control my body and mind.

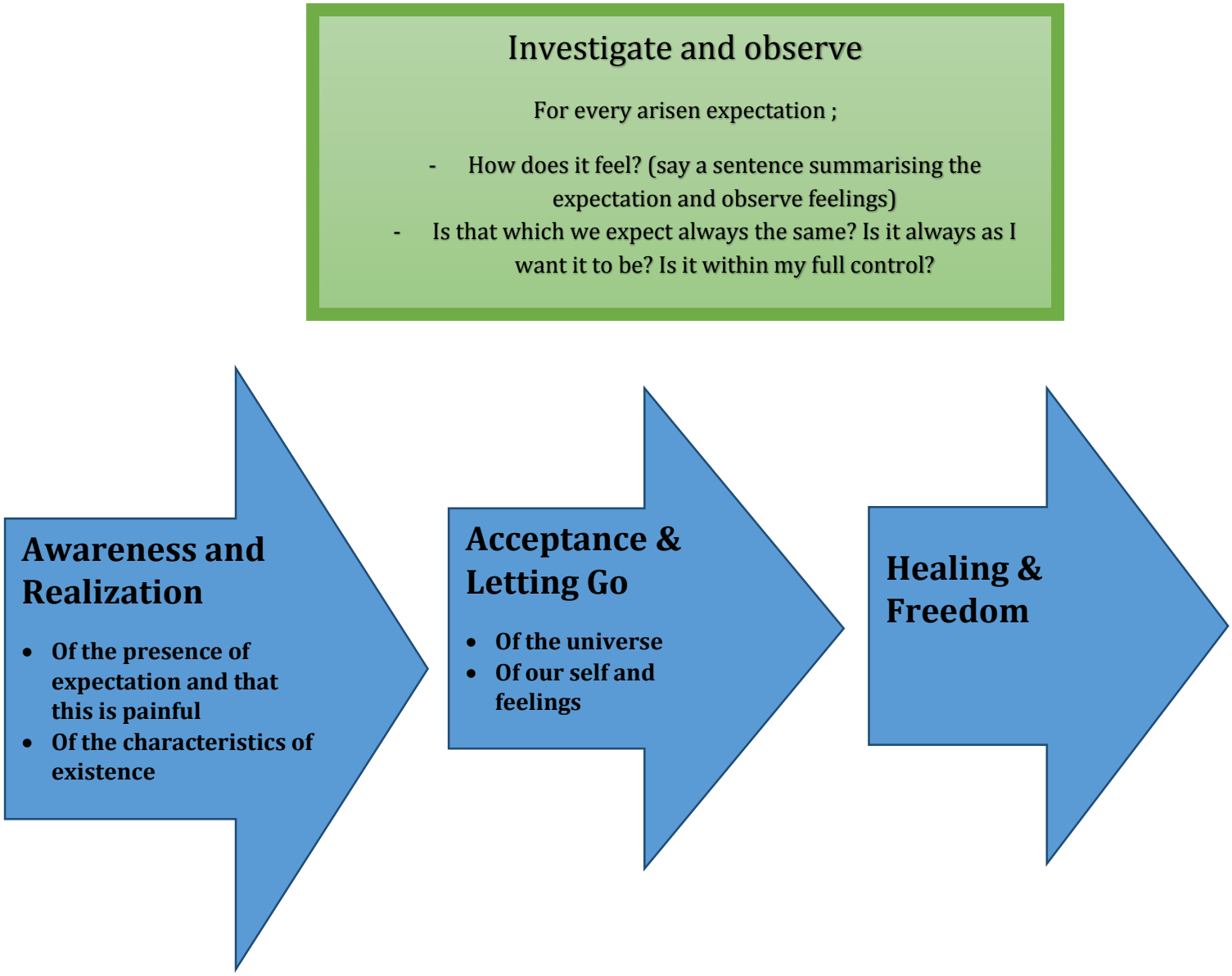
When life doesn't meet our expectations, we experience emotional pains

- Tension in the body may be a physical manifestation of expectations and grasping
- Expectations to not have our pain creates anger, which holds pains in our body
- Fear of pain prevents us from even looking at it
- Our biggest pains come from early childhood
- Much of our current pain is just from triggering suppressed childhood pains



By realizing the three characteristics, we can accept all our experiences as they are.

Deep accepting awareness into stored pains, allows that part of the subconscious to relax, it then stops grabbing the pain and allows it to pass.



- Sometimes, pain will not pass immediately, we don't fully control it. We can practice accepting that as it is

- Even with pain, it is possible to experience joy and happiness

Every time we do let go of pain:

- **In that moment, we feel lighter and happier**

- **Our baseline mind state shifts towards more joy, wisdom and compassion**

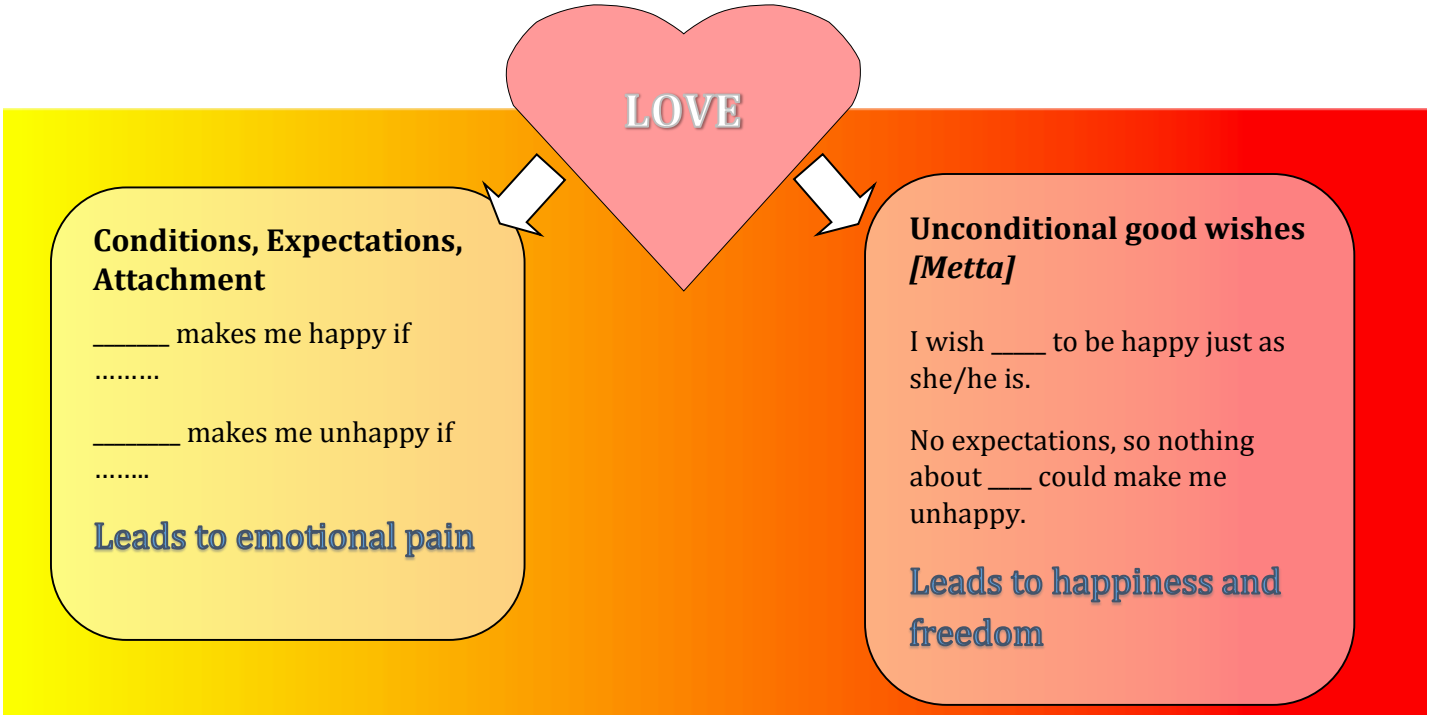
FURTHER READING

Walpola Rahula, What the Buddha Taught:

- Chapter 2- The first Noble Truth: Dukkha
- Chapter 3 – The second Noble Truth: Samudaya (The arising of Dukkha)
- Chapter 6 – The doctrine of No Soul (Anatta)

Anatta Lakkhana Sutta –The discourse on the characteristic of non-self – Samyutta Nikaya 22.59

Painting by Sophie Huttenrach



Gratitude can exist alongside unconditional love only if the gratitude does not include expectations for the future (through realizing that the future is out of our control).

The more that our love has expectations (i.e. - conditions), and the more frequently those expectations are not fulfilled, the more unhappiness it creates.

Cultivating love with less expectations will lead to more happiness.

Metta (unconditional love or unconditional good wishes) is the unconditional wish for a being to be happy, just as they are.

Having this wish for anyone also creates happiness for ourselves.

As there are no expectations, metta does not create unhappiness.

Most important is metta to our self, self-acceptance.

We can have unconditional acceptance and good wishes for a being regardless of their actions (i.e. – metta), and still take responsive action, which is conditional on their actions. I.e. – we can set up boundaries for ourselves.

- **Creates happiness (for self and others)**
- **Overcomes anger (including self-anger), fear and sadness**
- **Leads to freedom** by enhancing the realization of our interconnection with all beings (by valuing our happiness equally with others' happiness)
    - Reduces selfish expectations (ego)
    - Enhances acceptance of our own pains
- Metta can inspire actions to benefit others
- Metta makes beneficial actions more effective (less expectations and more kindness)
- Attracts metta from others
- Enhances inner stillness and calm
- Peaceful sleep
- Beautiful appearance

FURTHER READING

- Karaniya Metta Sutta, The Buddha's Words on Unconditional Love – Sutta Nipata 1.8
- Subja Sutta, Majhima Nikaya 99 – Verse 24

SUMMARY OF MEDITATIONS FOR KIND AWARENESS

These meditations are designed to progressively guide a practitioner towards true kind awareness of all feelings (ie – awareness with neither aversion nor grasping);

Breathwork practices (2-4 and 4-4 breathing with breath holds)

Quickly brings concentration and joy, which makes it easier to then maintain awareness on unpleasant feelings

Feelings Awareness

Enhances awareness of feelings, which allows deeper letting go.
Leads to deep acceptance of all feelings as they are, by realization of the 3 characteristics.

Unconditional Love

Deepens acceptance and kindness towards ourselves, our feelings and other people
Brings up happiness, which habituates the mind to happiness and makes it easier to accept unpleasant feelings.

Feel – Surrender – Love

Allows the letting go of unpleasant feelings and the underlying expectations stored in the body. Over time it deepens the realization that unpleasant feelings are present because we are holding them, and leads to deep acceptance.

Feel – Surrender – Love with attitude check

Significantly enhances the effectiveness and ease of the Feel – Surrender Love meditation by letting go of the resistances.

Healing Mindfulness – 4Rs with any object

Continuous letting go of unpleasant feelings and their underlying expectations, together with increasing concentration and joy (which then further enhances the letting go).

Healing Mindfulness – 4Rs with Love as the object

The object of love deepens acceptance of unpleasant feelings and expectations, which deepens the letting go. Additionally the object of love leads to additional joy and ease in concentration.

DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING

What is Diaphragmatic Breathing?

- As you inhale, breathe into your belly. Air enters the lungs, the chest does not rise and the belly expands.. As you exhale, pull diaphragm or navel towards the spine.

Negative Effects of Shallow Breathing

- Shallow or erratic breathing activates our Sympathetic Nervous System (fight or flight) which can create an increase in O2 levels that can lead to oxidative stress, erratic heart rhythms, increased heart rate and blood pressure and other forms of inflammation.

Benefits of Diaphragmatic Breathing

- When you breathe correctly (diaphragmatic breathing) you are balancing the SNS and PNS (Parasympathetic Nervous System). This is allowing for more balance in the system and creates a restful state within the body. This is also going to aid us to go deep into meditations.
- It helps you relax, lowering the harmful effects of the stress hormone cortisol on your body.
- It lowers your heart rate
- It helps lower your blood pressure

NOSTRIL VS. MOUTH

Make sure you are always breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth.

This is going to help more oxygen to fall into your lower lungs where more Parasympathetic Nervous Receptors are located. This helps create a deeper calming response in the body. This will allow you to take your students even deeper into meditation.

2X4 BREATHING (RELAXATION)

This is the beginning stage and also the most calming.

You will

- **inhale to a count of 2 (follow the music or beat) and**
- **exhale to the count of 4 (follow the music or beat)**

In through your nose and out through your mouth

- **When you breathe ''in'' you activate your SNS (fight or flight)**
- **When you breathe ''out'' you activate your PNS (rest and digest)**

When you extend your exhalation then you are focusing on activating temporary dominance to your PNS and creating a calming response to the body.

Benefits

- Lowers Heart Rate
- Lowers Blood Pressure
- Activated PNS
- Allows For More Focus
- Helps with Clarity and Clear Thinking

What is Heart Coherence

Coherence is a measure of the pattern in the heart's rhythm, and reflects a harmonious synchronization among the systems in the body such as the heart, respiratory system and blood-pressure rhythms.

How to Create Heart Coherence

Coherence occurs when you focus your intention (of gratitude) on your heart and you breathe deeply, smoothly and rhythmically so that each inhalation and exhalation are equally spaced out.

Coherence Breathing (4x4 Breathing)

- **Inhale to a count of 4** (follow the music or beat) and
- **Exhale to the count of 4** (follow the music or beat)
- Breath in through the nose and out through the mouth without a pause in-between.
- Rhythmical connected breathing

Heart Coherence breathing balances your thoughts, emotions, and harmonizes the physiological functions of your body. It will help you release stress and work through emotions like frustration and anger, giving you mental clarity and well-being in a matter of minutes.

The HeartMath Institute explains what heart coherence is:

"From a physics perspective, when we are in a coherent state, virtually no energy is wasted because our systems are performing optimally and there is synchronization between heart rhythms, the respiratory system, blood-pressure rhythms, etc."

Some of the positive benefits that you may experience when you are in coherence are:

Benefits

- You feel confident, focused, positive and calm.
- You have more energy and motivation.
- You have more coordination and speed in your reactions i.e. when performing sports or performing complicated tasks.
- Reduces the escalation of negative emotions (fear, frustration, anxiety, irritation or anger), however these emotions can also bring you out of coherence.

INTERMITTENT HYPOXIA

An ancient pranayama breathwork technique called Nisshesha Rechaka Kumbhaka or holding your breath beyond the comfort zone for a short period of time creates a physiological state known as intermittent hypoxia that involves brief periods of lower than normal blood oxygen levels.

HOLDING YOUR BREATH OUT

Kumbhaka is the retention of the breath in the hatha yoga practice of pranayama. It has two types, accompanied after an inhalation (known as puraka) or exhalation (known as rechaka).

When holding the breath after an exhalation, you create a build up of CO2 and deplete O2 in the bloodstream. The longer you can hold your breath out, the more you become 'hypoxic' which is a state of very low O2 levels in your blood.

Short periods of hypoxia is known as **intermittent hypoxia,** which has been shown in various studies to be beneficial to health.

Practice for Holding the Breath Out:

- Extend your exhalation until there is no air left in the lungs
- Hold the breath out and try to relax the body as much as possible.
- In this space between breaths, plant a positive seed of intention in your mind of something you want to call "in" to your life
- You may experience a tingling sensation around your body. This is your blood vessels opening up and a lot of oxygen serging from your blood cells into your tissues where your cells really need it.
- Override the first sensation to breathe and hold a little longer; this builds resilience

With practice, your breath retention time will get longer and resistance will melt away to allow for a deeper meditative state.

Benefits

- Creates positive stress response on the body.
- Makes Positive hormones go around the body
- Stimulates the growth of new red blood cells
- Dilates the capillaries especially in the brain so we get optimum blood flow to the brain.
- Because of the low oxygen in the body due to hypoxia it allows stem cells to move around the body.

HOLDING YOUR BREATH IN

Benefits

- Shoots more blood to the brain.
- This stimulates the Pituitary / Pineal glands which are like the master glands and they control all the other glands in our body.
- This breathing technique actually cleanses all the glands in your body.
- Activates your 3rd eye
- Gives you energy
- Makes you feel good

WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD PEOPLE NOT DO INTERMITTENT HYPOXIA TRAINING:

- Age restriction For Children over 12 years only and must be accompanied by a parent until the age of 16.
- IHT is contraindicated in the case of:
    - acute somatic and viral diseases
    - chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD-II and COPD-III)
    - chronic diseases with symptoms of decompensation or terminal illness
    - individual intolerance of oxygen insufficiency
    - cancer, unless IHT is prescribed by a doctor
    - people with epilepsy, pacemakers or heart arrhythmias, unless treatment (including IHT) is under direct medical supervision.
- Shouldn't really participate if
    - high blood pressure,
    - epilepsy,
    - heart conditions,
    - pregnant, etc.
- Do not do IHT if under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- Don't do while driving, operating heavy machinery, or when in water.

**If any of the above conditions are present, it is still safe for the individual to breathe smoothly in a 2-4 or 4-4 breathing rhythm without the periods of intermittent hypoxia.

- Sit/Lay down with your back straight
- Close your eyes
- Begin rhythmic diaphragmatic breathing (Breath in Beats)
- Breathe in through your nose
- Breathe out through your mouth
- Count In 2,3,4 Out 2,3,4
- Do 30 + rounds of continual connected breathing
- Take a full breath in and then empty all the air from your lungs and hold (typically 30 seconds for beginners)
- Here you go into a deep meditation – observe any feelings of fear or tensions; try to relax
- Override the first urge to breathe
- When you can't hold the air out anymore then take a full breath in through the nose and hold.
- Pull up on pelvic floor muscle (Mulabunda lock)
- Hold air in for 1 min or longer
- Rest awareness in the chest and observe any pleasant feelings
- Go back to your normal breathing

2-4 and4-4 breathing can be done without music.

Playing a drum beat or some music in the background can help to keep the rhythm, and can make the experience more enjoyable and engaging.

Niraj Naik created a set of music tracks especially for 2-4 and 4-4 breathing which he believes enhances the effect of the breathwork. The use of this breathing practice together with his music was branded as 'Soma breath'.

FURTHER READING

https://www.somabreath.com/

https://www.wimhofmethod.com/

https://www.heartmath.org/

HOW TO GUIDE A BASIC UNCONDITIONAL LOVE (METTA) MEDITATION

Relaxation and Focus

Relaxation enables participants to feel and receive metta easier. Metta practice in itself generally enhances focus.
The following activities can bring relaxation and bring participants into the present:

◊ Breathwork

- Soma 2-4 count
- Or simply ask people to breathe through the mouth making the exhale longer than the inhale, and a noise like a sigh

- Relax each part of the body sequentially
- Sounding a bell or playing soft music
- Ohm chanting
- Awareness of the earth
  - Become aware of the feeling of the ground,
  - Where do you feel this in your buttocks, legs, feet, etc.,
  - Allow yourself to relax in to the support of the ground.

KINDLE THE METTA FEELING

- **Smile**
- Relax in to the possibility that we are surrounded by unconditional love of Mother Earth (or heavenly beings or the Universe) like a soft glow.
- Relax each part of the body and welcome Mother Earth's unconditional love to soak in. Nourishing and nurturing every cell, every organ, and every space.
- Repeating *"May I rest in Mother Earths Love"*

OR

- Imagine a being that you find easy to love, such as a (real or imaginary) puppy, kitten or baby; or a person you know that you have a simple love and respect for, such as a grandparent or teacher.
- Relax each part of your body and welcome unconditional love for this being to soak in
- Repeating *"May ___ be happy, just as s/he is"*

- Relax each part of the body and welcome unconditional love for our self to soak in
    - *"May I be happy just as I am"*
- Welcome unconditional love to immerse your family, friends, and then the whole universe. Imagining them smiling.
    - *"May all beings be happy, just as they are"*
- End with self love again

For relaxing or sending love through the body, I usually follow the sequence:

- Chest and upper back/ neck / head / left shoulder, arm and hand/ right shoulder, arm and hand / belly and lower back / pelvic area / left buttock, leg and foot / right buttock, leg and foot.

VARIATIONS

- Radiate metta by area:
    - After metta for self, welcome the soft glow to radiate outwards and fill the whole room, combining with the metta from other meditators
    - Reflect the words "May all beings in this room be happy just as they are"
    - Welcome the soft glow to expand beyond the room to fill the entire street then town/country/continent/planet/universe.
    - Reflect the words "May all beings in this street/town/country/etc. be happy just as they are"
- Radiate metta based on your perception of the person
    - Self / selected easy-to-love person / selected neutral person / selected difficult-to-love person

Stay mindful throughout the practice - Whenever we find ourselves distracted, do the 4Rs (see 'Mindfulness' section)

FURTHER READING

Teachings of Bhante Vimalaramsi on Metta Meditation:

https://www.dhammasukha.org/beginner---lovingkindness.html

HOW TO GUIDE A BASIC FEELINGS AWARENESS MEDITATION

(VEDANANUPASSANA)

The ultimate purpose of this practice is to realize the three characteristics of existence (Tilakkhana) by observing these in the feelings (i.e. – that feelings are changing, not always pleasant and beyond full control). This deepens our acceptance, which allows us to have inner peace and joy regardless of the feelings.

This practice also refines our awareness of feelings, which enhances the effectiveness of the inner healing practice. Refining awareness of feelings also helps us enjoy pleasant feelings more, like chocolate! ☺

Here is an example to get you started.

Relaxation and Focus

Relaxation enables participants to feel and receive metta easier. Metta practice in itself generally enhances focus.
The following activities can bring relaxation and bring participants into the present:

◊ Breathwork

- Soma 2-4 count
- Or simply ask people to breathe through the mouth making the exhale longer than the inhale, and a noise like a sigh.

- Relax each part of the body sequentially
- Sounding a bell or playing soft music
- Ohm chanting
- Awareness of the earth
  - Become aware of the feeling of the ground,
  - Where do you feel this in your buttocks, legs, feet, etc.,

AWARENESS OF FEELINGS

- Bring your awareness in to the belly and pelvic area
- Be curious about what physical sensations and emotions are present in this area.
  - A gentle, childlike curiosity
- Cultivate acceptance for whatever feelings we find, by
  - Taking some long exhales through the mouth
  - Reflecting on the three characteristics of existence (Tilakkhana):

    ➔ "This feeling will pass; painful and pleasant feelings are natural; I am not in full control of it"

- Repeat the practice for:
    - The chest and solar plexus area
    - The neck and head area
    - The entire body

If you don't feel anything

- Keep exploring. With practice your awareness will become more refined.
- See if you can feel your clothes or watch on the body, or try touching the area with the hand.
- Once you have some feeling, move your awareness to a nearby part of the body, and notice the difference between the feeling you had and this nearby feeling. Keep exploring further.

In an individual session, you can ask the participant if they feel anything.

METTA (UNCONDITIONAL LOVE)

- Ending with a short metta practice deepens the acceptance of our feelings and creates happiness, which is motivating and inspires future practice.
- Briefly do a practice to kindle the metta such as focusing on mother earth or an 'easy to love' being. Allow the feeling to spread through the body by relaxing each part and repeating:
- *"May I rest in Mother Earths Love"*
- *"May ___ be happy, just as s/he is"*
    - End with metta for ourselves
- *"May I be happy just as I am"*

Stay mindful throughout the practice - Whenever we find ourselves distracted, do the 4Rs (see 'Mindfulness' section)

A BASIC INNER HEALING MEDITATION

The following (Vippassana-Metta) practice can be used to heal any emotional pain whenever these arise during daily life or during dedicated meditation sessions:

Feel

- ◊ Ask *"How do I feel?" "Where do I feel this in my body?"* (emotions or physical sensations)
- ◊ **Rest your awareness inside one feeling**
- ◊ Reflect on Tilakkhana:
- ◊ *Ask yourself "Did I choose for this feeling to arise?" "Can I remember a time when this feeling wasn't there?"*
- ◊ **Relax into the feeling, breath through the mouth, take long exhales, like sighs**

Surrender

- ◊ Trying to control feelings leads to pain
- ◊ Make the intention or prayer "May I surrender trying to control this feeling"
- ◊ Let go of any focus on the feeling
- ◊ **Change focus to the feeling of the ground**
- ◊ Relax the entire body, repeating 'Surrendered, Relaxed'

Love

- ◊ **Smile** as much as you can in this stage
- ◊ Relax in to the possibility that you are surrounded by Mother Earths unconditional love
- ◊ **Relax each part of the body and welcome the soft glow of unconditional love to soak in**
- ◊ Repeating 'Resting in Mother Earths love'
- ◊ Reflect "May I forgive myself for all my anger/sadness/mistakes/etc."
- ◊ Relax each part of the body and welcome unconditional self love
- ◊ Repeating "May I be happy just as I am"

Awareness, together with deepening acceptance, enables the release of painful emotions as well as a deepening acceptance of all daily life feelings.

Feel (Awareness & Acceptance)

- ◊ Awareness of all feelings in the body enhances overall acceptance by deepening our realization of the three characteristics of existence (Tilakhanna), i.e. – the feelings are ever-changing, not always pleasant, and not within our full control.
- ◊ Awareness focused on one painful feeling, could enhance dislike of that` feeling. Relaxed exhaling through the mouth and reflecting on the Tilakhanna enhances acceptance of that feeling.

Surrender (Acceptance)

- ◊ Practicing awareness with the purpose to let go of pain could allow some aversion towards the pain.
- ◊ Moving the awareness away from the feeling, and relaxing in a completely different part of the body helps us let go of this aversion, and deepen our acceptance that we are actually not in control of the feeling.
- ◊ Making the intention to surrender control, enhances our acceptance, making this as a prayer to a higher consciousness may even lead to them helping you to deepen your acceptance and release.

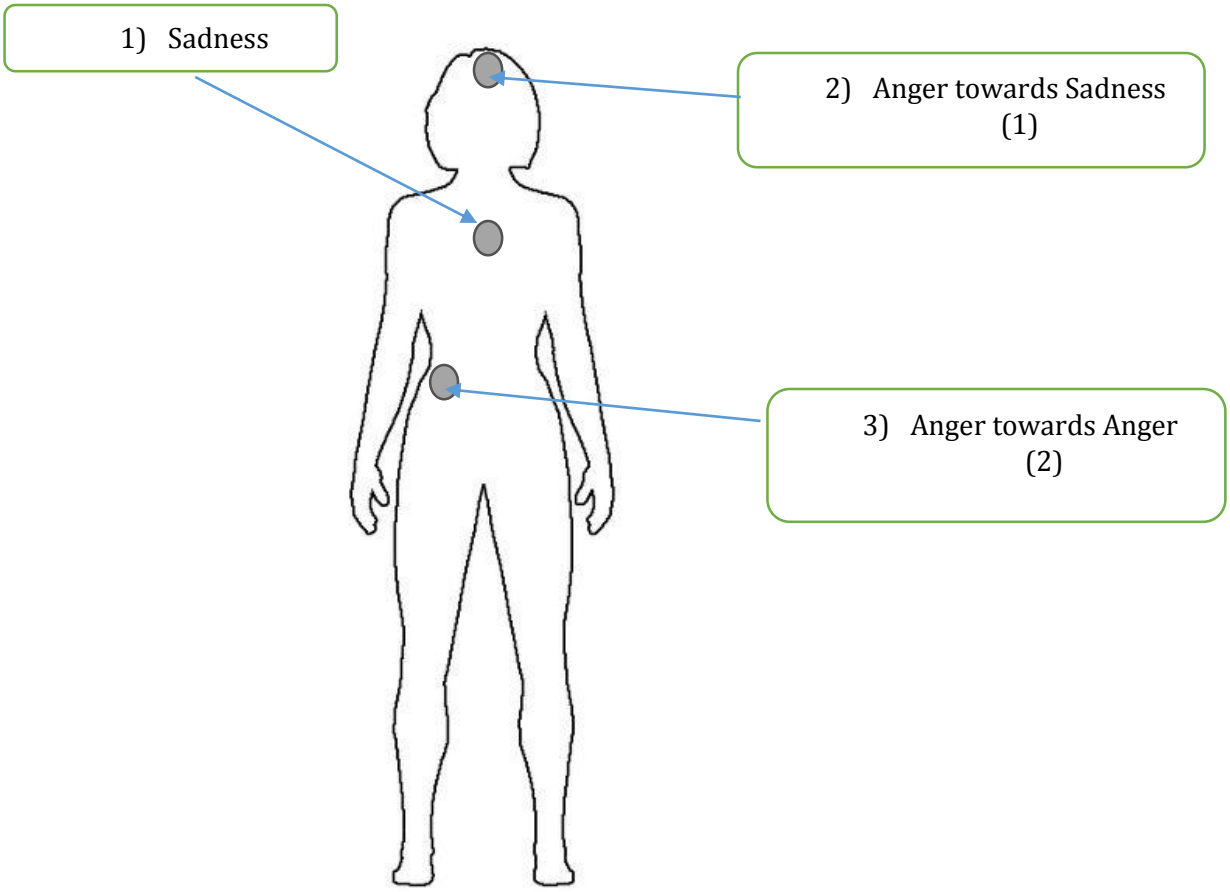
Love (Acceptance & Happiness)

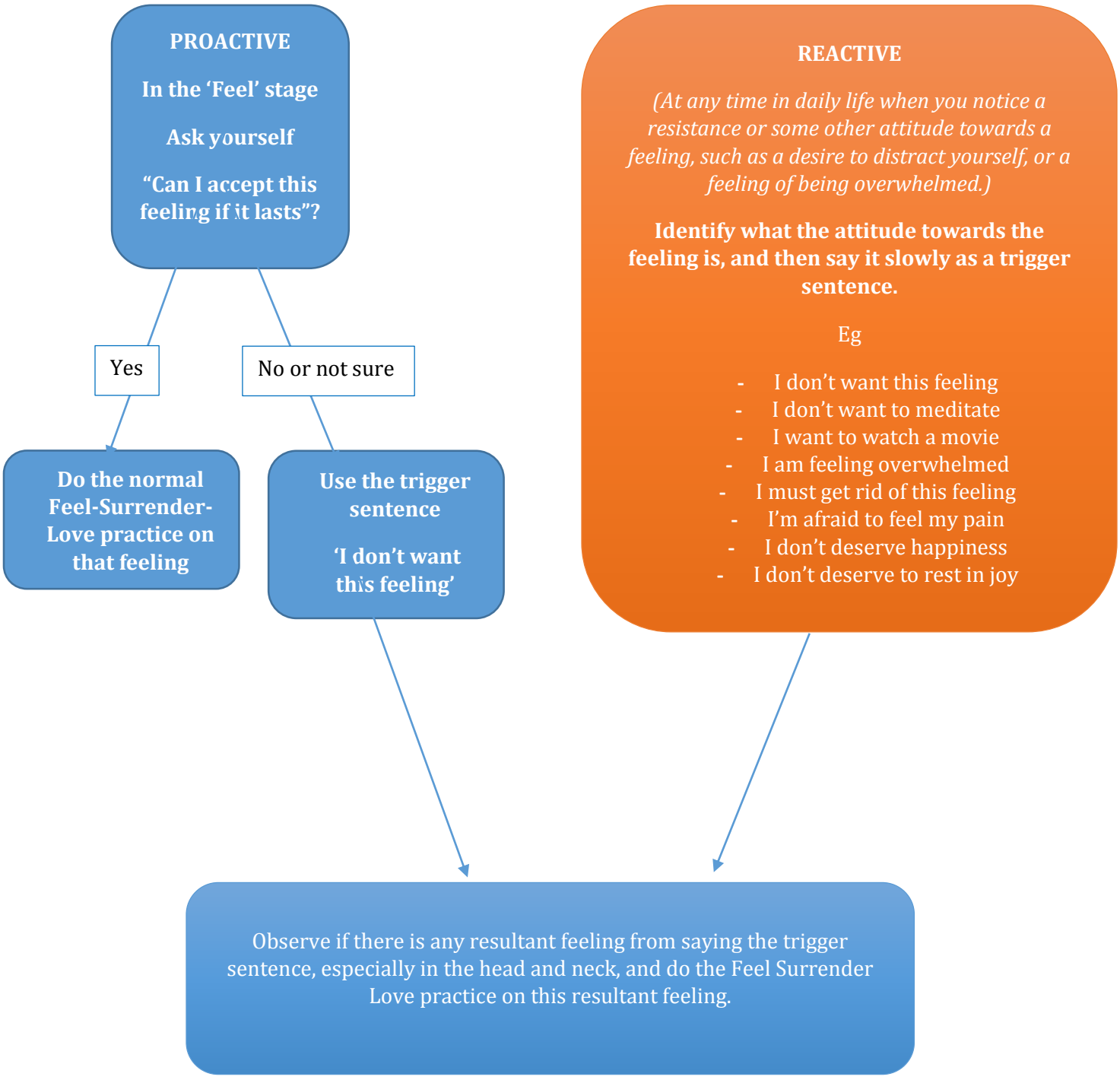
- ◊ The intention to rest in Mother Earth's unconditional love is a good wish for our self just as we are, so it deepens self acceptance.
- ◊ Spreading love throughout the body further removes focus from the original pain, which enhances acceptance
- ◊ Reflecting that Mother Earth has an unconditional wish for us to be happy makes it easier for us to have this wish for our self.
- ◊ Reflecting "May I be happy just as I am" enhances acceptance of our self, even with our emotional pains.
- ◊ Cultivating love and acceptance for all beings deepens our general level of acceptance in daily life.
- ◊ Additionally Love practice brings happiness, experiencing that feelings are not all painful deepens our acceptance.
- ◊ Happiness also inspires us to practice further.

ATTITUDE TO FEELINGS

(Based on the teachings of Venerable Sayadaw U Tejaniya)

- Disliking or wanting a feeling, causes emotional pain
- Our dislike (aversion) towards a painful feeling may hinder us from letting it go, our dislike (aversion) to pleasant feelings may hinder us from enjoying it.
- It is more effective to do the Feel Surrender Love practice on the *attitude* towards a feeling (e.g. dislike or wanting), than on the original feeling.
    - Resistance to observing the attitude is less than resistance to observing the original feeling
    - Letting go of the attitude can cause natural letting go of the original feeling
- It is possible to have several layers of attitudes towards feelings




PROACTIVE
In the 'Feel' stage
Ask yourself
"Can I accept this feeling if it lasts"?
Yes
No or not sure
Do the normal Feel-Surrender-Love practice on that feeling
Use the trigger sentence
'I don't want this feeling'
REACTIVE
(At any time in daily life when you notice a resistance or some other attitude towards a feeling, such as a desire to distract yourself, or a feeling of being overwhelmed.)
Identify what the attitude towards the feeling is, and then say it slowly as a trigger sentence.
Eg
- I don't want this feeling
- I don't want to meditate
- I want to watch a movie
- I am feeling overwhelmed
- I must get rid of this feeling
- I'm afraid to feel my pain
- I don't deserve happiness
- I don't deserve to rest in joy
Observe if there is any resultant feeling from saying the trigger sentence, especially in the head and neck, and do the Feel Surrender Love practice on this resultant feeling.

ENJOY PLEASANT FEELINGS

Whenever we experience pleasant feelings during the practice or in daily life, rest in enjoying these feelings for a while.

Frequent enjoying pleasant feelings

- Makes it easier to accept emotional pains, which makes it easier to let go of them.
- Gives us strength and inspiration to keep practicing.
- Makes the mind more inclined to happiness, hence we will be more likely to experience pleasant feelings in the future (neuroplasticity).

PLEASANT FEELINGS OF RELEASE

Resting awareness in pleasant feelings of release encourages further release by deepening the subconscious realization that awareness and surrender of pain are a pleasant experience.

A mantra can help stay focused "May I rest in joy/bliss/softness"

COMMON SYMPTOMS OF RELEASE

Below is a list of pleasant feelings that can arise as a result of the release of emotional pains,

- Feeling lighter, happier, bliss
- Tiredness or exhaustion
- Tingling, vibrations, twitching, throbbing or rocking feeling
- Pleasantly feeling drawn into the Earth
- Heat throughout the body or in spots
- Changing colors behind the eye lids
- Physical releasing such as yawning, tears, coughing, sneezing, farting, burping, spitting, gastric reflux, or diarrhea

DURING PRACTICE

Every time we find ourselves lost in a distraction from our practice, use the Mindfulness **4Rs:**

(1) Recognize that a distraction has occurred

(2) Relax the tension and let the thought be

(3) Rejoice with a smile, and

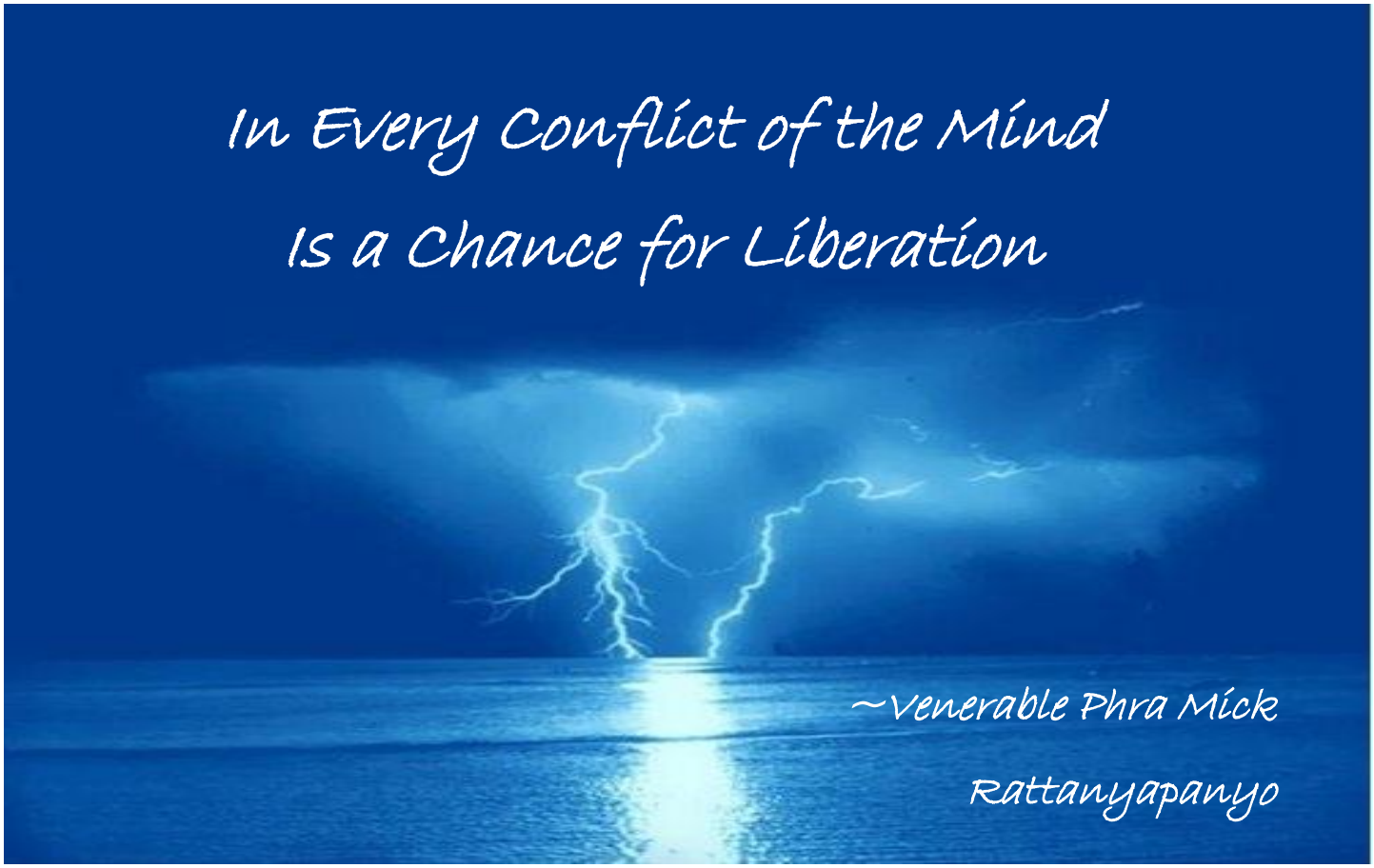
(4) Return to the practice.

AFTER PRACTICE

Even if pain is still there, let it be and enjoy a different activity for some time. Changing activity while still remaining lightly aware of the pain deepens acceptance of all pains, which leads to future releasing.

Imagine this like holding a baby that is experiencing that pain, we don't let the baby go, neither do we try to force the baby to change, and yet while holding the baby we can do other activities.

We can be content and happy even while a pain is there, this is true freedom.



Any difficulty we experience in life may be a reflection of our inner pains (i.e. – an argument, a failure, a decision to make, a bad feeling, ruminating thoughts, compulsive consumption, etc.).

Take the problem as an opportunity to heal, ask "*how does this make me feel*?" and use the Feel-Surrender-Love practice, even briefly.

Healing the pain may bring far more ongoing happiness than resolving the outer world difficulty, and may even manifest a solution.

Regular dedicated meditation practice increases your chance of noticing emotional pains arising in daily life.

INTRODUCTION ON THE METHOD

Explain the steps and when they will have a chance to state their intended topic for the session.

Explain the use of trigger sentences; acknowledging that the sentences may not reflect their subconscious pains, by saying it they can find out for themselves.

Relaxation and Focus

Outcome – client is in a relaxed state and thereby holding their pain less and able to look within easier. This step is best done before the participant discusses their intended topic.

Relaxation enables participants to feel and receive metta easier. Metta practice in itself generally enhances focus.
The following activities can bring relaxation and bring participants into the present:

- ◊ Breathwork
  - Soma 2-4 count
  - Or simply ask people to breathe through the mouth making the exhale longer than the inhale, and a noise like a sigh.
- Relax each part of the body sequentially
- Sounding a bell or playing soft music
- Ohm chanting
- Awareness of the earth
  - Become aware of the feeling of the ground,
  - Where do you feel this in your buttocks, legs, feet, etc.,
  - Allow yourself to relax in to the support of the ground.

RAISE AWARENESS OF SUPRESSED EMOTIONAL PAINS

Outcome: Client has become aware of at least one feeling in their own body related to an emotional pain.

- ♦ In an individual session
  - Ask the participant if there is some topic they want to look at. If yes, ask them to describe the issue or memory in detail.

- If they say they want to look at a general feeling (e.g. – anger or fear) then ask them to describe situations, which brought up that feeling.
- While they are talking observe for indications of their emotional state (either intuitively or based on voice tone, facial expression, body language etc.).
    - You may notice a feeling arising in them that is already clear and strong; in this case you can guide them to directly observe their feelings.
    - Or you may notice that as they make a particular statement, a feeling arises in them that they are not clearly aware of (see examples below). When you find this, ask the client to repeat that sentence slowly, while they observe the feelings in their body.
        - "He didn't listen to me"
        - "I might lose my job"
        - "Its always hard for me"
    - Or, a trigger sentence may intuitively arise in your mind. Then you could suggest they say the sentence slowly while they observe the feelings in their body.
    - If for any reason you could not observe any feeling in the client (Eg - if the client does not have any issue they want to look at, or if no trigger sentences come to you) then guide them to observe for feelings in each area of their own body, like the head, chest, belly, until they become aware of a feeling.

♦ In a group session

- Guide participants to remember a situation in their life that brought up a specific given feeling, such as fear, sadness, anger or stress. Then guide participants to observe the feelings in their own bodies.
- Or, trigger sentences may intuitively arise in your mind. Then you could suggest they say the sentence slowly while observing the feelings in their own bodies.
- Next guide participants to observe for feelings in each area of their own body, like the head, chest, belly, until they become aware of a feeling.

FEEL – SURRENDER – LOVE

- Follow the feel-surrender-love practice including checking for attitude as previously described.
- In the feel stage, ask participants to see if they can identify the shape and size of the feeling. In an individual session, asking the participant to describe their feelings can deepen their awareness and acceptance.
- In the surrender stage, your own prayers for the pain to be removed can enhance the release.
- After the surrender stage, you could choose to bring awareness to another emotional pain and go through the feel surrender stages for that too. Repeat this as many times as you wish and then eventually move to the love stage.
- At the end, invite participants to look inside for any pleasant feelings, and rest the awareness there for a while. Every so often you can guide them into the 4Rs so as to release distracting pains and stay with the pleasant feeling.

AFTER THE PRACTICE

- Occasionally participants may continue to feel strong emotional pain even after the session.
- It's possible for a person to bring awareness to a suppressed pain and then have so much aversion to it that this creates a lot of new pain.
- However in a single short meditation, the most likely case is that they simply found their suppressed pain, and suppressed pains cause ongoing low-level unhappiness and could even lead to disease.
- The very act of bringing awareness (with some acceptance) to pain already helps to let some of it go, which means they have already helped themselves a little. Now if they change activity while still remaining lightly aware of the pain this will help them let go further, as well as to have deeper self-acceptance in general.
- If they wish, you can guide the participant in to another round of Feel Surrender Love.

Note: It is important to schedule some time after the practice to be help participants who end with a strong painful feeling.

Stay mindful throughout the practice - Whenever we find ourselves distracted, do the 4Rs (see 'Mindfulness' section)

Mindfulness practice is to "meditate by observing the body, feelings, mind and mental objects as they are; for the disappearance of pain and distress; for the realization of Nibbana"

~ Paraphrased from the Satipatthana Sutta, Majihma Nikaya 10 [1]

"Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally."

~ Jon Kabat-Zinn

"Mindfulness means to remember to observe how mind's attention moves from one thing to another."

~ Venerable Bhante Vimalaramsi [2]

[1] A combination of the English translations made by Bhante Sujato, Bikkhu Bodhi and Walpola Rahula Thero

[2] "A Guide to Tranquil Wisdom Insight Meditation", Bhante Vimalaramsi, p10

(Based on the teachings of Venerable Bhante Vimalaramsi)[1]

- **Intention:** Reflect "I intend to rest awareness with <selected object> and to 4R distractions"
- **Enjoy stillness:** The mind will stay with this object for a period that is beyond your full control
- **Distraction:** The mind will naturally get distracted, whenever you notice this, do the following;

- **4Rs**:

Feel

◊ **Recognize** – that a distraction has arisen and feel for related tension (in the head and neck)

Surrender

◊ **Relax** – the tension created by the distraction, especially at the head and neck. An exhale like a sigh can help. Let the thought be, give it no more attention.

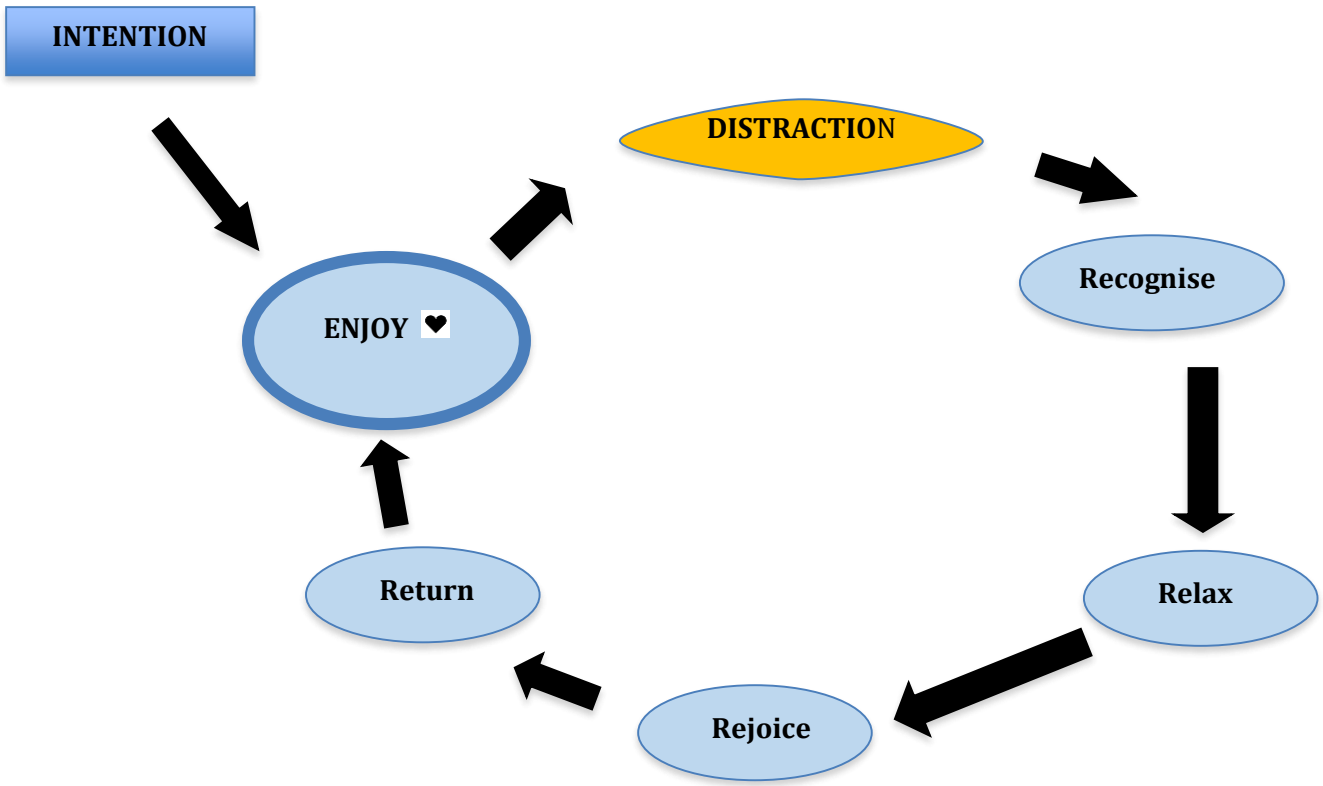
Love

◊ **Rejoice with a SMILE ☺**

- Well done! You have found and let go of a distraction. This is great because:
  - You have let go of a stored emotional pain
  - Letting go will be easier next time
  - You can now enjoy the present a little more
- Smiling brings happiness

◊ **Return –** to the object

[1] "A Guide to Tranquil Wisdom Insight Meditation", Bhante Vimalaramsi, p20



Tips

- The nature of the mind is to continuously wander and to ruminate in painful thoughts
- Letting go of painful thoughts gets easier every time we do it
- If you notice this even once and bring it back then you have developed your minds ability to let go, and experienced at least a moment of peace in the present. This noticing and returning is precisely the practice, well done!
- As long as you follow the **4Rs** when you recognize a distraction, then no matter how long you have been distracted for you have still gained significant benefit from your meditation practice.

Where we are is not as important as which direction we are moving in

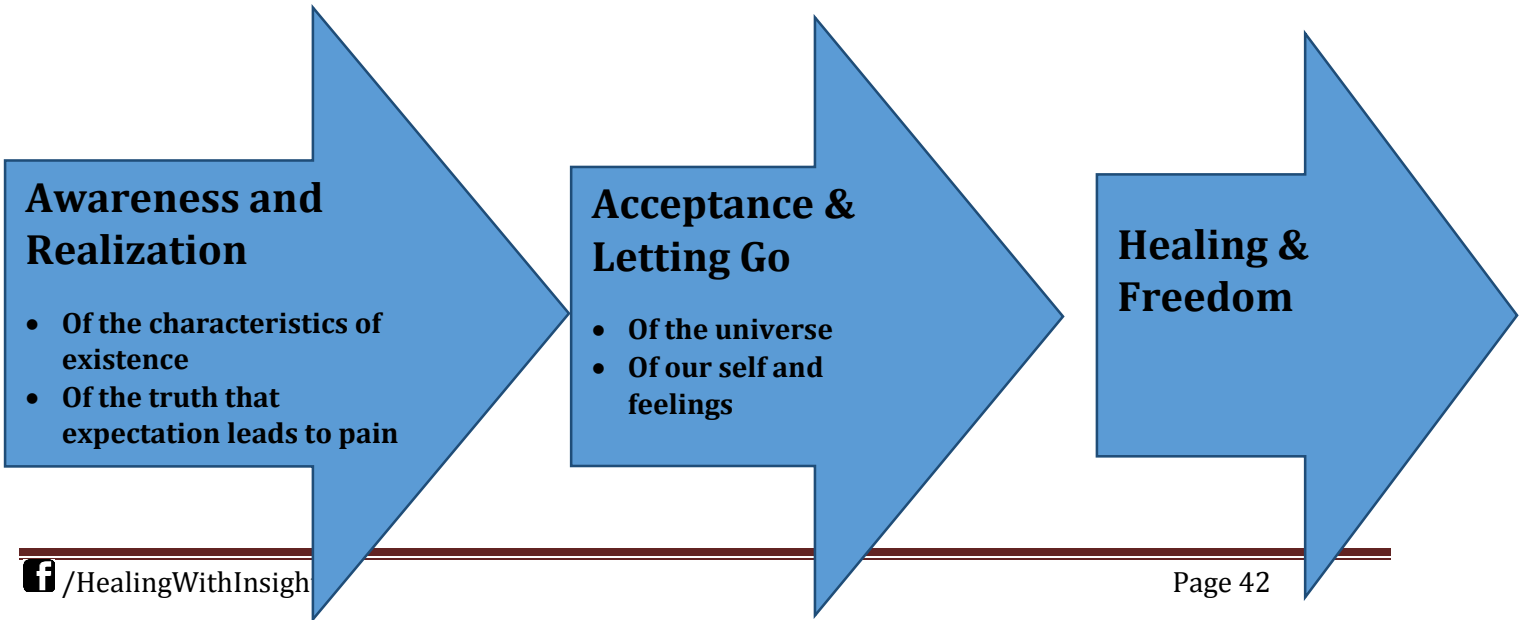
- **Wiser and more effective actions**

When the mind stays with the intended object we have an increased capacity to receive input from the world, to process this and to act.

- **Joy and bliss in the present**
  - When the mind stays in (or near) the present, bliss naturally begins to arise
  - Releasing stored tensions often allows some bliss to arise, this blissful state helps the mind be more present and also makes it easier to recognize distractions arising
  - Rejoicing and smiling also bring up a positive happy state

- **Let go of emotional pains, for deeper inner peace and freedom**
  - Relaxing the tensions arisen from distracted thoughts releases stored emotional pains from the past.
  - With less emotional pains, we experience our natural bliss more frequently
  - Recognizing and releasing distracted thoughts enhances our ability to let go of emotional pains that arise in our daily life. I.e. – it enhances our acceptance of everything

- **Develop realization, for deeper inner peace and freedom**
  - By observing our body, feelings and mind we deepen our realization of the three characteristics of existence and how craving/expectations leads to emotional pain;
  - This deepens our acceptance of the universe and our self as we really are, which leads to freedom from emotional pains.



TRANQUILITY WISDOM INSIGHT MEDITATION

(VENERABLE BHANTE VIMALARAMSI)

- Start by a short practice of metta (unconditional good wishes), until you experience the feeling of metta. It can be easier if you use a sentence like
- *"May ____ be happy, just as I/he/she is"*
- Then do the 'Healing Mindfulness Practice' with the intention to rest awareness on the feeling of metta.
- As a sitting practice, you can enhance your experience by committing to stay perfectly still throughout.
- You can also do this practice maintaining mindfulness of metta while walking, eating or your normal life activities.

COMMON OBJECTS FOR MINDFULNESS PRACTICE

- **Relaxing while moving the body** (e.g. – walking, eating, yoga, going to the bathroom, sports, etc.)
- **Feelings** – emotions and tensions in the body, or sights, sounds, smells, textures and taste
- **Unconditional Love** (Metta)
- **The breath**
- **Any daily life activity including planning, talking and office work**
- **Any meditative or introspective practice**

- Do an introspective practice every morning, this enhances the likelihood that you will be able to look inside during the day
- Walking meditation is very helpful because we often walk in daily life anyway and this will remind us to practice mindfulness
- Define common daily experiences as reminders to check for distractions and follow the **4Rs**
    - Mindfulness bell app
    - Before stepping through a door
    - The sound of a car passing
    - Receiving a call or text

FURTHER READING

- Walpola Rahula, What The Buddha Taught – Chapter 7: Meditation or Mental Culture: Bhavana
- Satipatthana Sutta, Majihma Nikaya 10 – The Buddha's discourse on the Foundations of Mindfulness
- Venerable Bhante Vimalaramsi, A guide to Tranquility Wisdom Insight Meditation
- https://www.dhammasukha.org/beginner---lovingkindness.html
- https://www.dhammasukha.org/metta-barebones-booklet.html

1. PRINCIPLES FOR THE ROLE OF A GUIDE IN SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

Thank you to Venerable Bhante Sujato and Venerable Phra Olarn for your inputs to this.

Diligently cultivate the mind

Be humble,

Guide with respect and compassion.

DILIGENTLY CULTIVATE THE MIND

The inner peace and unconditional love that you develop from your practice will teach and inspire people more effectively than information.

Inner peace and unconditional love are also the most important factors in guiding a quality meditation, it will carry in your voice, and your vibe, and it will highly affect the state of mind of the people you guide.

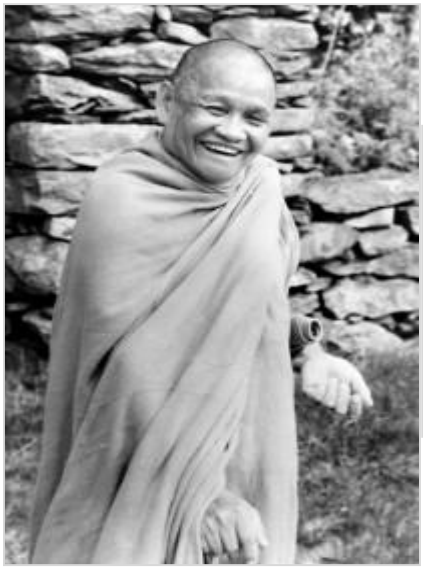
Your ongoing inner cultivation is an important part of your ongoing work of teaching.

"You cannot reveal to others

that which is hidden to yourself"

~ H. H Dalia Lama

- **To enhance your own inner peace and love during class:**
  - Have a daily meditation practice.
  - Use the 4Rs throughout the day.
  - Schedule time before and after each class for your own inner healing or love practice (30-60m minutes). This ongoing healing will improve your teaching dramatically with time.
  - Allow yourself to be vulnerable and soft with whatever feelings are present while you are teaching, this will help you let go of those emotional pains.
  - Avoid rushing, take deep breaths while you speak, it's better to give a simple and slow guidance than be rushed or excited.



"Don't [consider yourself to] be anything at all,

if you [consider yourself to] be anything at all,

you will suffer"

~ *Venerable Ajahn Chah*

- **Don't identify with peoples images of you**
  - People may project all kinds of deluded images on to a teacher. It's very hard for a teacher to not identify with those images; however that is what will actually help them.
  - Not identifying with those images will also protect the teacher from getting arrogant when receiving praise or getting unhappy when receiving criticism.

- **Be honest about your difficulties and limitations, avoid 'Performing Purity'**
  - If you are feeling low, or have made a mistake, be open about it, allow yourself to be vulnerable. This is empowering for people you guide. You are not enlightened and that's okay.
  - If you don't have experience with what someone is sharing, let them know.

- **If you pretend to be happy when you are not:**
  - You will model this to the people you guide, and they will subconsciously learn to also pretend that they are happy, and numb their feelings.
  - Those who believe you will feel a gap between you and them, and will therefore feel that what you teach is not within their reach. They may admire you but feel disheartened or demotivated from actually practicing themselves.
  - People may realize that you are pretending.

- **Avoid trying to advise people with serious mental health problems**
  - If someone appears to be seriously deluded or traumatized, then its best to admit that you don't have the experience or training to help them.
  - Some mental health problems can be made worse by the wrong meditation practices, there is also the risk that by advising them in their practice you delay them from getting help, or that you validate a person's delusions.

A PRACTICE TO CULTIVATE HUMILITY

Reflect that the quality of the meditation class and people's impressions of you are the result of factors which are not within your full control, and hence not your achievement, such as:

- The behavior of your parents, which affected what mental patterns you have.
- The opportunities for building wealth that you were given, which then enabled you to practice and to learn to be a teacher.
- The deep work of the Buddha and other enlightened masters, and the lineage of teachers; who discovered and passed on most of the content that you are teaching.
- The level of practice of the participants as well as their state of mind at that moment.
- What happened to you just before the class, which positively or negatively affected your state of mind.

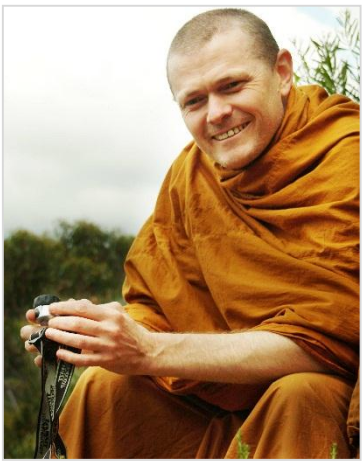
Reflect on the Tilakkhana (characteristics of existence) with regards to the perceptions people have of you:

- The perceptions people have of me will change (anicca – shift happens)
- There will likely be times that people think poorly about me (dukkha - shit happens)
- I don't have full control over the perceptions people have of me (anatta – no full control)

These reflections will help you to feel less unhappy when the class goes bad and also help you feel less afraid of making mistakes.

"The role of a mediation teacher is to facilitate people to try and see themselves. "

~ *Bhante Sujato*



- **Everyone has the answers within themselves**
  - The role of a mediation teacher is to facilitate people to try and see themselves. The answers needed for enlightenment are already within them.
  - The way you relate to people is very important, a teacher can provide a space where people feel safe and understood, so they can feel encouraged to practice for themselves.

- **Listen with an open heart, give people power and responsibility over their actions, and learn from them**
  - You are on a long journey and still have a lot to learn, the people you guide are on their own long journeys and you don't fully understand them.
  - What you think is good for others, or even what you think is true, may not be the case at all.
  - Even if your view is good for someone, it's often more important to help them gain confidence in their own wisdom than to tell them what to do.
  - The experiences of the people you guide may have given them insights that you can learn and grow from.

- **Be compassionate**
  - Most people experience a lot of difficulties in life. Giving them acceptance and respect, may help them more than giving information.
  - The fact that they are looking for a way to their peace is already a major achievement worthy of respect.
  - Reflecting on your own inner pains and challenges can help to cultivate compassion

- **Remind yourself and others that psychic insights are not always accurate**
    - Your perception can always be affected by your own ego, and therefore the receiver must make their own choices.

Start by teaching for free: ☺

Start a free (or by donation) weekly group, or volunteer to teach at a school or club.

This will be a much lower pressure space to practice, make mistakes and grow.

This also deepens humility and creates good karma.

Schedule time before a class for your own inner healing or love practice (30-60m minutes)

- **Tips on speaking**
  - **Speak each word clearly**, when nervous, you may tend to speak quieter or less clearly
  - **Use your own style** for guiding and teaching, you will do best in the style that you are comfortable with
  - **Avoid saying 'you' or 'your'.** Speaking from the perspective of the participant can make it easier for them to focus and follow and decrease identification with their feelings
  - Bring curiosity to the question *"How am I feeling?"* vs. *"Be curious about how you are feeling"*

- **Read the audience and adapt the meditation accordingly**
  - **Observe for signs like**; fidgeting, open eyes, drooping, snoring, or lying down
  - **Be compassionate** and don't take such signs personally
    - Most people find it's really hard to look inside, they may be confronting deep pains
  - **If the audience is restless or stressed then respond by:**
    - More breathwork, movement, music, chanting etc.; it is most important to help them relax.
    - Give more wordy guidance
    - Use shorter meditations or switch to different types of meditation
    - **Bring awareness to their state** (even if it means stopping the meditation):
      - Ask them about it, 'whose feeling stressed/restless today?'
      - Offer to guide them into healing on this
      - Or guide them to consider what they want out of this time, and if they want to meditate, guide them to make an intention to be present.

- **Keep it simple**
    - People remember very little, prepare a few key points to focus on

- **Help them feel the lesson for themselves**
    - For example, to teach that "getting angry with others hurts ourselves", get them to focus on their anger towards someone, and then observe their own feelings and discuss.
    - When responding to questions, ask the questioner to consider a relevant example in their own life, and discuss the issue from that example. This also helps to avoid intellectual debates.

- **Focus on the perspective of participants**
    - While preparing, imagine yourself as a participant experiencing it, with their level of background
    - During classes, sometimes bring your awareness to how the participants may be feeling

- **Use multiple sense inputs**
    - Make a whiteboard drawing to illustrate your point. Or use crayon or colour pencils.
    - Write notes on paper and stick it on the wall for future
    - Use a printed or painted picture
    - Use teaching videos
    - Be creative.

- **Use repetition**
    - Memory is enhanced by repetition at increasing intervals

- **Get participants to engage in the topic**
    - Meditations to reflect and feel in to the topic based on participants life experiences
    - Ask questions to the larger group
    - Small group discussions
    - Mind maps
    - Presentations, summaries and pictures made by participants, then stick these on the walls.

- **Break it up with fun exercises**
    - People can typically hold focus on learning for about 40minutes, after that their attention declines
    - Use games and movement practices as breaks. When you help people have fun, they will be more interested in listening to you.

"Mano pubbaṅgamā dhammā, mano seṭṭhā mano mayā"

Mind precedes all phenomena. Mind is their chief; they are all mind-made.

~ The Buddha – Dhammapada Verse 1

Reflecting on everything you have experienced in this course, consider and write down what you would like your life to be like a year from now, your state of inner peace and love, and the type of work you will be doing.

Now decide and write down, what you would like to be doing (if anything), that will help to bring you to your intended future. Review the lesson on 'Laying the Foundations for future growth' for some ideas.

RESOURCES TO CONTINUE YOUR PRACTICE

FIND A MEDITATION GROUP NEAR YOU

- http://www.buddhanet.info/wbd/ - Directory of meditation centers around the world
- http://plumvillage.org/ - The monastery of Venerable ThichNahtHanh in France
- http://www.mindfulnessbell.org/directory.php - Directory of mediation groups in the Plum Village tradition (I consider this tradition also valuable but perhaps more playful than the Theravada style)
- https://www.dhamma.org/en-US/locations/directory - World Directory of courses under the Burmese teacher S. N. Goenka, quite popular among Western people

MEDITATION APPS

Meditation Apps

- Insight Timer
- Head Space
- Omvana
- Waking Up
- Ten Percent Happier

(I haven't tried any of the apps so I can't make a recommendation)

Mindfulness Bell Apps:

- Breathe Meditation Timer & Mindfulness – great simple app
- Plum Village Zen Buddhism Meditations - great simple app
- Bodhi Timer– great simple app
- MindBell – a little more complex and allows for more tailored bell sequences.

This is a short list of good teachers in the area of Buddhism and meditation. Note that even though just one book is listed they all have numerous books and talks available, so please explore. Some of these books are available as pdf files online. Also note that they are mainly from the Theravadin tradition, which I am most familiar with. There are many good teachers in the Zen, Tibetan and Vedic traditions as well.

/HealingWithInsight - Meditations on Inner healing, accepting our feelings and Metta; talks etc.

GENERAL

- Bhante Vimalaramsi, Dhamma Sukha Meditation Center. www.dhammasukha.org - Books, talks, online retreat with a teacher.
- www.suttacentral.net: Database of suttas (original teachings of the Buddha)
- Forest Sangha. www.forestsangha.org: International Monasteries in the Theravada Buddhist Tradition of Ajahn Chah, many books and talks by monks and nuns, e.g. Ajahn Sujmedho.
- www.dharmaseed.org: Many talks and guided meditations by monastics and laypeople such as Joseph Goldstein, associated with the Insight Meditation Society.
- www.audiodharma.org: Many talks and guided meditations by monastics and laypeople such as Gil Fronsdal, also series talks, especially the Sati Center daylong workshops.

BOOKS

- 'What the Buddha Taught' by Walpola Rahula Thero – Comprehensive book overviewing traditional Theravada Buddhism (pdf version available online)
- In the Buddha's Words: An Anthology of Discourses from the Pali Canon by Bhikkhu Bodhi
- Satipaṭṭhāna: The Direct Path to Realization by Bhikkhu Anālayo (Buddhist monk, scholar and meditation teacher)
- Full Catastrophe Living by Jon Kabat-Zinn
- Mindfulness, Bliss, and Beyond by Ajahn Brahm (many talks at www.bswa.org)
- Right Mindfulness by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu (many books and talks at www.dhammatalks.org)
- Mindfulness: A Practical Guide to Awakening by Joseph Goldstein
- Lovingkindness: The Revolutionary Art of Happiness by Sharon Salzberg
- Hardwiring Happiness by Rick Hanson
- 10% Happier, How I Tamed the Voice in My Head by Dan Harris (also has an app and podcast)
- Thich Nhat Hanh, Vietnamese Buddhist monk, published many books.
- Dhamma Everywhere: Welcoming each moment with Awareness+Wisdom by Sayadaw U Tejaniya (other books and talks available at www.ashintejaniya.org)

[This is what should be done]

By one who is skilled in goodness

And who seeks the path to peace:

Let them be able and upright,

Straightforward and gentle in speech,

Humble and not conceited,

Contented and easily satisfied,

With few duties and frugal in their ways.

Peaceful and calm, and wise and skilful,

Not proud and demanding in nature.

Let them not do the slightest thing

That the wise would later reprove,

Wishing: In gladness and in safety,

May all beings be happy.

Whatever living beings there may be,

Whether they are weak or strong, omitting none,

The great or the mighty, medium, short, or small,

The seen and the unseen,

Those living near and far away,

Those born and to be born,

May all beings be happy.

Let none deceive another

Nor despise any being in any state.

Let none through anger or ill-will

Wish harm upon another.

Even as a mother protects with her life

Her child, her only child,

So with a boundless heart

Should one have good wishes for all living beings,

Radiating kindness over the entire world:

Spreading upwards to the skies

And downwards to the depths,

Outwards and unbounded,

Freed from hatred and ill-will.

Whether standing or walking, seated,

Or lying down — free from drowsiness —

One should sustain this recollection.

This is said to be the sublime abiding.

By not holding to fixed views,

The pure-hearted one, having clarity of vision,

Being freed from all sense-desires,

Is not born again into this world.

These are selected poems from the Therigatha, (Khuddaka Nikaya), they are the words of enlightened nuns in the time of the Buddha. Each poem is titled by the name of the enlightened nun who spoke it. Most of the verses below are from (unless specified otherwise):

https://zmm.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Reading-Therigatha.pdf

Uttama

Four times, five times, I went out from the monastery,
heart without peace, heart out of control.

I approached the nun,
she seemed like someone I could trust.
She taught me the dhamma
about what makes a person
about the senses and their objects
and about the basic elements that make up everything.

I listened to what she taught,
did exactly as she said,
for seven days I sat in one position, legs crossed,
given over to joy and happiness.
On the eight day I stretched out my feet,
after splitting open the mass of mental darkness.
(Thig 3:2)

Uttara

Self-controlled with the body,
with speech, and with the mind,
having pulled out craving down to the root,
I have become cool, free.

Mitta

Usually people do all eight lay precepts
only on an Uposatha day,
but I did them on the fourteenth, fifteenth, eighth,
and even on other days of every fortnight,
[praying][2] that a goddess' body would be mine one day.

Today I eat just one meal a day,
my head is shaved,
and wear the outer robe of a nun.
My heart's fear and its sorrow are gone:
I don't want a goddess' body either.

Dhammadinna

She who has given rise to the wish for freedom
and is set on it, shall be clear in mind.
One whose heart is not caught in the pleasures of the senses,
one who is bound upstream, will be freed.

[2] The original translation says 'happy' but I have replaced this with 'praying' to make the meaning clearer

Patachara

Furrowing fields with plows, sowing seeds in the ground,
taking care of wives and children, young men find wealth.

So why have I not experienced freedom,
when I am virtuous and I do what the Teacher taught,
when I am not lazy and I am calm?

While washing my feet I made the water useful in another way,
by concentrating on it move from the higher ground down.

Then I held back my mind,
as one would do with a thoroughbred horse,
and I took a lamp and I went into the hut.

First I looked at the bed, then I sat on the couch,
I used a needle to pull out the lamp's wick.
Just as the lamp went out, my mind was free.
(Thig 5:10)

Mittakali

I went forth in confidence from home to homelessness,
I wandered about, looking for gain and recognition.

I ignored the highest goal, taking to a low goal instead,
ruled by defiling compulsions, I never knew what an ascetic's goal was.

Then while I was seated in my hut I began to fear the inevitable,
I knew I was on the wrong road, under the rule of craving.

Life is short,
old age and illness already crush me,
there's no time to waste
before this body is broken by old age.

Looking at a person and
seeing that a person is made only of impersonal parts,
seeing those as they changed over time,
waxing and waning,
I stood up, my mind freed,
the Buddha's teaching done.

Nandā

(Nanda contemplates a dead body and thereby grows disenchanted with her own.)

"Sick, putrid, unclean:
look, Nandā, at this physical heap.
Through contemplation of the foul,
develop your mind,
make it one, well-centered.

As this [your body], so that.
As that, so this.
It gives off a foul stench,
the delight of fools."

Considering it thus,
untiring, both day & night,
I, with my own discernment
dissecting it,
saw.

And as I, heedful,
examined it aptly,
THIS body - as it actually is -
was seen inside & out.

Then was I disenchanted with the body
& dispassionate within:
Heedful, detached,
calmed was I.

Unbound.
(Thig 5:4)

Source: Translated by Thanissaro Bhikku

www.dhammatalks.org/suttas/KN/Thig/index_Thig.html

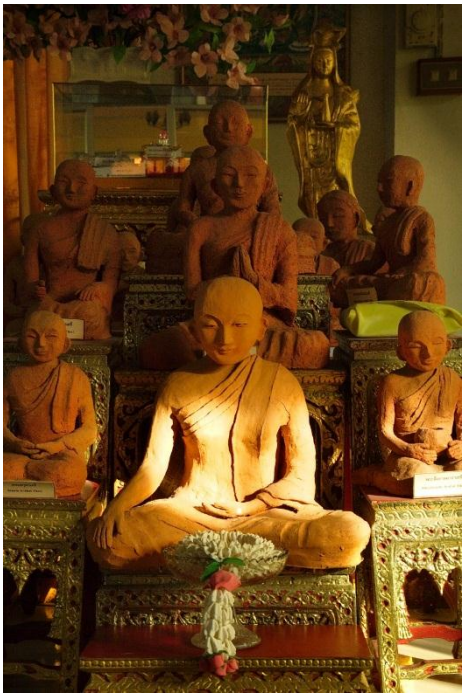
Sujātā

With subtle veils adorned,
Garlands and sandal-wood bedecked,
Covered all over with ornaments,
Surrounded by my servants,
Taking with us food and drink,
Eatables of many kinds,
Setting off from the house,
To the forest grove we took it all.

Having enjoyed and sported there,
We turned our feet to home
But on the way I saw and entered
Near Saketa, a monastery.
Seeing the Light of the World

I drew near, bowed down to him;
Out of compassion the Seeing One
Then taught me Dhamma there.

Hearing the words of the Great Sage,
I penetrated Truth:
The Dhamma passionless,
I touched the Dhamma of Deathlessness.
When the True Dhamma had been known,
I went forth to the homeless life;
The three True Knowledges are attained,
Not empty the Buddha's Teaching!
(Thig 6:4)



Source: Translated by Hellmuth Hecker and Sister Khema
www.scribd.com/document/275124233/Therigatha

GOOD LUCK! :)

PLEASE GET IN TOUCH IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS OR WANT A HEALING OR CONSULTATION SESSION

MUCH METTA

NISHAN