

## Meditation on Equanimity

To establish a basis on which we can develop love and compassion for all beings, without discrimination.

### Preparation:

**Nine Round Breathing** - A technique for settling the mind when beginning a meditation. Start by closing the left nostril and breathing in with the right nostril – then close the right nostril and breathe out through the left nostril. You can imagine all your negative energies exiting when you breathe out of the left nostril. Do this for 3 breaths. Then reverse by closing the right nostril and breathing in the left nostril. You can imagine you are breathing in all the positive energy of the universe. Close the left nostril and breathe out through the right nostril. Do this for 3 breaths. Then breathe in and out through both nostrils, evenly.

And **set a motivation**: Think I am going to do this meditation in order to better understand my own mind so that I might better benefit myself, my loved ones, and all living beings.

**Body of the meditation**: Begin by visualizing three people sitting in front of you facing you - one is a close friend, the other is a stranger, and the third is someone you dislike, someone you could label 'enemy'.

As you visualize each person, be aware of your different responses to each of them.

Then check: Why do you have these different responses to these three people? Is it just based on what these people do for you (or don't do for you) at this point in time?

Check in your experience with your friends - are there individuals who you once labeled 'friend', maybe even 'best friend', and yet they are now strangers to you, or maybe even enemies? Is it possible that the friend visualized in front of you could do or say something that would make them lose their position as your friend?

Then look at the stranger. How easy is it for that person to change into a friend, or an enemy? Isn't it true that all your current friends or enemies began as strangers to you, and that they could all become strangers again?

Then look at the person labeled 'enemy'. Why do they seem to you appropriate to have that label? Have they always been someone who harmed you? Can you imagine that they could change, that they could become your friend? Has that happened with others in your experience?

So, check - is there any real basis on which we can cling to these distinctions, a basis for us to only have warm feelings for friends, aversion or hard feelings for enemies, and indifference to those we call strangers? Isn't it true that, as we change the label we give to people around us, that we could reasonably have even feelings for all? ... And isn't it true that all beings in the world fall into these three categories - friend, enemy, stranger - so there is no one left out?

Then check further: Isn't it the case that all beings want happiness and want to avoid suffering, just like you - and if all beings have the capacity to be our friends, then isn't it possible to wish for the happiness of all those around us, not just our friends? To have warm feelings for all? Isn't it the case that each individual equally is struggling with delusions, and has the capacity to become enlightened?

Which attitude will bring us more happiness - to have warmth and concern for everyone or only for a small number of people?

**Dedication**: May this effort be a cause for developing equanimity so I can be happier and be of benefit to my loved ones & others immediately and to benefit all sentient beings as soon as possible.