

GLADDENING THE MIND:  
MEDITATING IN THE DIVINE ABODES

Session Four: Appreciative Joy



# TRAUMA AND RESOURCING

“If we cannot be happy in spite of our difficulties, what good is our spiritual practice?”

— Maha Ghosananda, the Gandhi of Cambodia



# EMPATHY: COMPASSION AND JOY

The realities of delight and difficulty ... the 10,000 joys and sorrows of this life ... the negativity bias (again) ... appreciation as a light in the darkness

Pairing difficulty, and compassion ... with blessings, with enjoyment

Our capacity for compassion and joy are directly related because *both* are expressions of empathy.

Empathy orients toward blessing and compassion.



# APPRECIATION ... GENTLE ENJOYMENT

Appreciation is the life-blood our being ... and of relationships.

“Gratitude is the heart of prayer.” — Brother David Steindl-Rast

If you are not appreciating / being appreciated out loud, there is occult bleeding going on in your relationship, a kind of taking-for-grantedness.

Resourcing ... cultivating enjoyment and gratitude, even in the midst of difficulty ... supporting ourselves and guarding against overwhelm and exhaustion.



# ACCESSING ... TUNING IN

Establishing your posture ... grounding, aligning, spaciousness, open-heartedness ...

Deeper than usual breaths ... in through the nose ... out through the mouth ...

Making contact with your intention ... asking for assistance in placing joy in your heart/mindstream

Set aside any limiting beliefs ... pervading this body with friendliness



# SOME PHRASES ...

“Enjoying the blessings of this moment ... enjoying the blessings of this life”

“May you enjoy the blessings of this life”

“Holding this suffering with kindness and compassion”

“May you hold this suffering with kindness and compassion”

These are phrases Chris Cullen, a U.K. mindfulness teacher and friend



# APPRECIATIVE JOY

“Let yourself think of someone you care about. Picture them, remember them, see them in your mind's eye or hold them in your heart. Imagine their happiest moment as a child. Then begin to wish them well: ‘May you be joyful. May you remember that child of spirit that was born in you. May your joy increase. May the causes for happiness and joy grow stronger in your life.’ Then imagine this person wishing the same for you.” — Jack Kornfield



# THE BODILY SENSE OF ENJOYMENT ... AND KINDNESS

This breath ... this sense of ease ... placing a hand on the heart  
... bringing someone else to mind ... may you enjoy the  
blessings in your life ... may your blessings *continue ... and  
deepen ... and increase* ... may you hold this suffering with  
kindness and compassion ... enjoying ... compassion ... letting  
the phrases go ... just being



# THE CATEGORIES

Gladness for another ... for yourself ... for someone who has helped you along your path ... for a stranger(s) ... for a difficult person ... for all beings.



# RESOURCES

Jack Kornfield, *A Lamp in the Darkness: Illuminating the Path Through Difficult Times*

Gordon Peerman, *Blessed Relief: What Christians Can Learn from Buddhists about Suffering*

Alan Wallace, *The Four Immeasurables: Cultivating a Boundless Heart*