

GLADDENING THE MIND:
MEDITATING IN THE DIVINE ABODES

Session Five: Equanimity

DEEPENING MINDFULNESS

Concentration Focus: collects and unifies the mind

Sensory Clarity: see/hear/feel

Equanimity says, “This moment is like this.”

Equanimity is a certain matter-of-factness about this moment.

AFFLICTIVE AND BENEFICIAL STRATEGIES

Most of us use thinking as our primary emotion regulation strategy.

We need emotion regulation when we exceed our “window of tolerance,” when we are dysregulated.

SECURE COLLABORATION

When dysregulated as children, and later as adults, the best strategy is secure collaboration, where we learn intimate, beneficial strategies in the caring company of another.

MONKEY SEE, MONKEY DO

As children, we mimic adults and their coping strategies in our family of origin. When we have secure collaboration in the context of secure attachment, we learn beneficial strategies. When we are insecurely attached, there is little experience of collaboration. Instead, we learn afflictive strategies.

AFFLICTIVE STRATEGIES: THEY DON'T WORK!

Examples of Afflictive Strategies: get it right (perfectionism), get it fixed and get it done (obsessiveness), get your approval (accommodation), worrying and ruminating, incessant planning, dominating, judging, avoiding and hiding, hopelessness, helplessness, complaining, awfulizing, catastrophizing, addictions, feeling ashamed, loathing, argumentativeness.

SEE/HEAR/FEEL

A repeating thought/feeling is related to past or future. This thought is a theme you learned in your family. Label the repeating thought and drop into the body's felt sense.

* When emotion exceeds the window of tolerance, then repetitive strategy replaces the present moment. This afflictive, repetitive strategy that you learned in your family of origin is a bad strategy! You can replace this afflictive strategy with a beneficial strategy.

First, investigate what you do, your Afflictive Strategy.

Then, replace your Afflictive Strategy with a Beneficial Strategy.

EQUANIMITY IS A BENEFICIAL STRATEGY

First, notice See / Hear / Feel: mental imagery, mental talk, emotion in the body.

Second, pair what you notice with the Sound of Silence and/or Spacious Awareness. See if the Afflictive Strategy turns off with this Beneficial action.

If this does not bring Equanimity, then substitute of a different Beneficial Strategy, for example, imagining a benevolent figure from the Ideal Parent Figure Protocol. “I’m here. I’ve got you. I choose you. You’ve got this.”

The warmth of Lovingkindness and care of Compassion, along with lightness of Appreciative Joy and stability of Equanimity, are primary Beneficial Strategies.

“Equanimity is the basecamp to Nirvana.” — George Haas

RESPONSIBILITY: THE CAPACITY TO RESPOND WISELY

“What is the goal of a lifetime of practice? An appropriate response.”

What is happening? How may I best respond?

Being with our experience in a non-reactive way ... a wide range of Responsiveness ... various actions of gentleness and strength ... Equanimity's “near enemy” of indifference and passivity — the dead spot of numbness.

“All beings are owners of their karma, and their happiness or unhappiness depends upon their actions, and not upon my wishes for them.”

SOME PHRASES ...

It's like this right now.

Things are as they are.

May I accept that this is how things are for you (me) right now.

Whether I understand it or not, things are unfolding according
to a natural law.

ALL FOUR DIVINE ABODES

May friendliness be known ...

May compassion be known ...

May gladness be known ...

May spaciousness be known ...

DEDICATION OF MERIT

May our practice be for our welfare ...

and for the welfare of all beings.

RESOURCE

Shinzen Young, *The Science of Enlightenment: How
Meditation Works*