

AABCAP



The Four Immeasurables in Buddhism and Psychotherapy

MODULE 4: Day 2

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Joyful Presence

Definition of Mudita: Altruistic / Empathetic /
Appreciative Joy

The Buddha called Mudita – the mind
deliverance of gladness of heart.

3 Dimensions to Cultivating Joyful heart

- Personal joy
- Empathetic / sympathetic joy
- Sublime joy

Definitions of Happiness

- Hedonic Happiness – joy from the senses
- Eudemonic Happiness – happiness derived from living a meaningful, virtuous, purposeful life

Mudita - Joy

- The far enemy is:- despair, joylessness, envy, jealousy, discriminating mind
- The near enemy is dizzy excitement, silliness

Impediments to Cultivating Joy

- Critical, Judging mind – negative bias
- Perfectionistic tendency
- Comparing mind
- Jealousy and envious states of mind
- Depressed, anxious and overwhelmed with stress, despair, trauma, PTSD, loss

Allies to Cultivating Mudita

- Rapture, delight
- Gratitude
- Practicing generosity
- Metta and compassion share their origin in our basic goodness

Neuro-psychological research – factors that increase happiness

- 1. Our ability to reframe our situation more positively
- 2. Our ability to experience gratitude and appreciation for life's gifts
- 3. Our choice to be kind and act generously

8 – Pillars to Cultivating Joy

- **4 Qualities of the Mind:-**

Perspective, humility, humor, acceptance

4 Qualities of the Heart:-

Forgiveness, gratitude, compassion, and generosity

Gratitude

- Brother David Steindel Rast – It's not happiness that makes us grateful but gratefulness that makes us happy

Cultivating Personal Joy

- What nourishes real Joy for you?

Empathetic Joy

- Empathetic Joy is a non-judgemental joy
- Desmond Tutu – Our greatest joy is when we seek to do good for others.
- Cultivating appreciate joy for even people we don't like

Sublime Joy

- Sublime Joy:-
- is a Joy that is combined with wisdom the selfless dimension of our essential nature.
- arises from realizing our interconnectedness
- is a heart that is open and at ease with the way things are
- is supported by Mindfulness and the 8 pillars of Joy

Clinical application - Joy

- Cultivating personal joy – releases the burden of hearing so many stories of suffering
- Perspective – look at something from 6 different angles
- Ability to reframe a situation positively
- Release the hindrances of jealousy, envy, critical, comparing mind.
- Notice what nourishes real joy in ones life –Enhances, happiness purpose and meaning
- Practice taking in the good.
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Prayer of Joy

May I learn to take care of myself joyfully

May your happiness and good fortune
increase

May you be happy and know the joyful heart

Qualities of Equanimity

- **Non-attachment** the art of letting go and letting be.
- **Balance**, centeredness, groundedness, to arrest the mind before it falls into extremes of elation or despair, for or against, likes or dislikes
- **Peacefulness** – spacious, stillness, being fully present to changing experiences
- **Meeting** openly what is happening with steadiness

The Gift of Equanimity

All beings are the owners of their karma.
Their happiness and unhappiness depend
on their actions
- not on my wishes for them.

Equanimity

- Near enemy – cold detachment, cool indifference
- Far enemy – agitation, hysteria, judgmental reactivity



Love, compassion, joy and equanimity
are all interconnected.

One without the other is unbalanced.

Four facets of the same one jewel.

A natural progression from love to compassion to joy to Equanimity

- With love we learn to like ourselves and see the essential goodness in others
- With compassion we feel empathy for our own and others vulnerability, we grow the capacity to be with the pain of others
- When we can befriend our experience, joy arises and we celebrate and appreciate life's abundance
- With equanimity we feel at ease, the mind is free of reactivity and judgement, it is clear, open and responsive. This enables us to settle down and work with others in harmony and good will.
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The 4 immeasurables in practice

- Practice loving-kindness for all beings
- Compassion for someone who is suffering
- Sympathetic joy for someone who is happy, successful or better off than oneself
- Equanimity for someone who is suffering but you cannot do anything about their situation or current circumstance, no matter how much you care for them

Boundless love

“Love teaches me I am everything,
Wisdom teaches me I am nothing
Between these two poles my life
flows” Nisagadatta Baba Maharaj

Clinical application of Equanimity

- Greater holding space
- Staying balanced, grounded, calm and connected as a therapist
- Equanimity prevents enmeshment and over-involvement with client's story a healthy non-attachment
- Ability to notice and meet what is happening with the client
- Mind is free from reactivity and judgment
- Stable, peaceful calm presence – creates a safe presence and atmosphere for client

Equanimity – Benefits for client

- Client can learn emotional regulation with mindfulness and equanimity especially with unpleasant feelings, pain, sensations and thoughts.
- Reduces defensiveness and enhances observation and dis-identification
- Enhances strength, centeredness and resilience
- Greater impulse control
- Radical acceptance
- Greater self-awareness – clear calm observation

Equanimity - Clinical outcomes

- Research indicates:

A mindful, kind, compassionate, equanimous therapist, one who can cultivate and abide in the four Immeasurables has an impact on their own quality of being, has an influence on the quality of the therapeutic relationship and client **outcomes**. (Stanford Uni - Centre for Compassion and Altruism Research)

Practice

Abide in the boundless spacious heart
of equanimity -

Still, open expansive awareness

Prayer of Equanimity

- May we accept things as they are
- May we be at ease with the comings and goings of events
- I will care for you but cannot keep you from suffering
- I wish you happiness but you are responsible for your choices, actions and decisions
- May you find peace