



Good morning everybody. This video series is going to be on *tsewa* [tenderness of heart] and there will be four talks. This talk is about how we all have an innate tender heart and how we can access it. That tender heart is the source of all happiness in our human society. Even in the animal realm, animals are still joined together by their relations, by the structure of the animal family life. You can see this with elephants or any other species of animals.

First, I wanted to give a little bit of background. All human beings wish to be happy and we are always trying to cultivate the means to be happy. We all wish to be free from suffering, and we are always trying to get rid of the conditions of suffering. That binds us all as one human race and makes our lives very much equal. In that sense, we all have a tenderness towards ourselves and our loved ones.

There is a sense of something underneath or beyond all of the external conditions of who we are and how we are brought up—what culture we belong to, what race we are, whether we have the means of happiness and wealth, or any other status. Inside we are identical, and when we not only believe that but really feel it in our heart towards other living beings, that opens up our heart to others.

However, there isn't always an aspiration in one's own mind to be happy and to cultivate the conditions of happiness. We shouldn't make an aspiration exclusive of other living beings, we should include other living beings in our own aspirations. Try to really connect with other beings on an emotional level and on the level where we recognize that they are all living beings who desire to be happy and long to be free from suffering. With that reasoning, try not to separate yourself and focus just on your aspiration for happiness alone, without considering others. That ultimately doesn't achieve anything. It just makes us more narrow, small, and self-centered.

If we expand our aspiration to all living beings or all humanity, it makes us grow. We're able to experience greater connection and responsibility. It also opens our heart and helps us access that connection and the tenderness that we have for ourselves, as well as on behalf of others. This is the core value or principle of Mahayana Buddhist teaching or wisdom— seeing oneself and others as equal.

Tsewa is an emotional experience from our hearts. As I mentioned, we experience it when we feel tender towards ourselves and our loved ones. We want to tap into that feeling even more and try to grow that. We can grow this feeling towards other living beings and human beings who we



share this planet with and who we live with as a human society. We are all part of the extended family of human society.

I am going to ask you to do a short practice to access the tender heart where I'll show you how to be in touch with tsewa. As with any Buddhist meditation practice, first we need to develop our concentration to bring our mind and body into the right place. *Samatha* meditation to calm one's mind is required. We'll do a very short samatha practice. Close your eyes and focus on your breath. Take a deep breath in, then release it. [Pause.]

Take another deep breath in and then exhale. You can do this up to 21 times and count the breaths, just to sharpen your concentration. Depending on how much time you have, you can just do up to seven or ten breaths, or however many you have the time to do.

After doing that samatha practice, think of someone who has shared much warmth and open-heartedness with you, someone who has poured a lot of loving affection on you in a way that you really cherished and was a great comfort for you. This person could be your mother, your father, a great spiritual friend, or any other friend. It could be your spouse or your own children that have expressed that open-heartedness, warmth, and tender affection with you. It could even be a pet that you have a strong connection with and that you feel a sense of love, openness, and warmth from. Just visualize one of these people and try to remember that feeling of being touched and that sense of immediate relaxation in your being, a sense of ease and happiness. Please do that for one or two minutes. [Pause.]

This being is present in your life, they are very open to you and to whatever you're saying or whatever you're going through. There is a sense of the tremendous care that they have for you, for your well-being. There's also the aspiration that they hold on your behalf, just as you have an aspiration for yourself. That makes us feel very loved, showered with the feelings of love and tsewa. [Pause.]

You appreciate their care. You always feel at ease in their presence and never have doubts that they might be here for selfish reasons. They are there for you with very few conditions or no conditions at all, and try to remember how much you really feel comforted by that. Try to recall that experience, so you can be in that feeling or experience yourself. [Pause.]

Recall how, in turn, you felt that heart of openness and tenderness for them, as well as a feeling of deep connection and affection. As much as they expressed that to you, you wanted to express



that, or you did express that to them. Or at other times perhaps you also felt that kind of openness, tenderness, or love with another. Someone you really wanted to be there for, to help make their lives better, like your own children, parents, spouse, or even your pet. You had a sense of dedication to them. Try to really recall that experience with the feeling of total softness inside of you that has no holding, tension, or reservations about yourself being in duality with them. Please try to recall your experience of your own heart towards others in that way—the object of your tsewa or love.

Recall that when you're able to feel that way with another living being, you feel so happy and deeply yourself. You are touched by your own good heart and you feel so generous and tolerant. If you are able to do something for someone you have that connection and love with, it creates a deep happiness and satisfaction. Recall any other times that you felt that happiness.

That is essentially what it is to open your heart and be in touch with your own tender feelings, as well as the emotions of well-being and happiness in the moment. There's a sense of developing a bond and trust with one another so that there is a more continuous positive experience flowing from that point.

That is the first talk on how to get into the mindset of tsewa and the open heart. This feeling is the opposite of contraction, the opposite of fear, the opposite of being focused in a sense of tightness of your own self-centered mind. It really makes a difference to see both the feeling of tsewa and openness. Then you can actually identify the heart of tsewa and the heart of the open mind, and open your whole being towards others.