

So for the Buddhist practitioner, aloneness becomes the base state of our practice. As we begin to sit with our loneliness, the demandingness of our loneliness and begin to recognize that that is an unrealistic demand; no one can take away our loneliness. Loneliness is connected with us and our own state of mind. As with the quote I mentioned earlier, Milarapa said that, “Going to the mountains of desolation and settling in it, we begin to develop some kind of peace and freedom in our experience.”

So when we as practitioners begin to make friends with loneliness—settle into the hot and demanding immaturity of loneliness and make friends with it—we begin to feel aloneness dawn in our experience. At first it feels rough. It feels difficult. It feels sad. It feels very tender. But as we stay with it, we begin to feel the dignity of that state. That’s our basic humanity. As we make our home in that aloneness, we begin to taste some kind of space and freedom that we may not have had before.

One of the very powerful practices for making our home in aloneness is the practice of loving kindness. It’s very important that we begin with loving kindness practice for ourselves. I’m going to do a brief loving kindness contemplation: loving kindness for our own solitude, our own freedom as we sit in our aloneness.

If you can take good posture, close your eyes. I’m going to go through four wishes for our own happiness. The first wish: may I be free from danger? May I be free from danger? May I be free from enmity, violence and conflict? May I be safe from injury and threat? May I have a sense of refuge and be free from torment? May I be free from the torment of loneliness?

The next wish: may I have mental happiness? May I have mental happiness? May I be free of mental torment of any kind? When difficult times come, perhaps extended loneliness, may I not nourish or cultivate the pain? Instead, finding peace and tranquility in the midst of alones. May I feel peace of mind and joy? May I have mental happiness?

May I have physical happiness? May I have physical happiness? May I enjoy good health and freedom from physical pain? When sickness or injury come, may I receive physical pain with equanimity and practice in such a way that pain is a support for peace? May my physical pain not lead to mental torment? May I have physical happiness?

May I have the ease of well-being? May I have the ease of well-being? May my life’s circumstances not be difficult? May my relationships, friendships or love relationships, my livelihood and my family life be harmonious and enjoyable? May the elements of day-to-day life be free from struggle? May they be accomplished gracefully and easily? May I have the ease of well-being? May I be happy? May I experience the freedom of aloneness?

So, as we conclude this contemplation, I’d like you—during this week—to contemplate your aloneness. When you find yourself feeling lonely, lean into it. Make your home in

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your loneliness and let it dawn as aloneness. Taste the simplicity, peace and freedom of aloneness. Thank you very much. See you next week.