

Anne C. Klein

Week 2, *Embodied Love: Core Tibetan Trainings for an Unbounded Heart*

August 11th, 2014

“Love”

Okay, hello again. Thank you for coming back. So perhaps it has been some time since we last were conjoined, either by reflecting on equanimity and your relationship to it. And as we said last time, the way in which we work with equanimity, which will also be the way we will work with love, begins with setting up our posture, our sense of support, feeling of trust in what is supporting us—sense of a strong column of alignment through the center of the body.

I'll add an element to this when we do the guided meditation. We could add using sound here because sound is also a way to sensitize ourselves to what is occurring in our body. So we do that and then we reflect for a bit on equanimity, what we know about it, how it feels to us when we have encountered it. Maybe some evening by a lake with a breeze gently blowing, nothing going on, nothing anticipated, just the pleasure of that moment of sky and water and feeling easy, feeling like there was some kind of a cushion of evenness and balance and ease and relaxation of reactivity and even if suddenly someone or something appears before you, you're still equanimous.

You respond. Maybe some animal darts out of the woods or someone calls you with a very high pitched, anxious voice, but you don't lose your ease, your calm, that depth of balance that you've found in yourself. So maybe you already know some of these things about equanimity. And then the second step is to really begin to really make a commitment to exploring your own relationship to equanimity by reflecting on how it can be useful, easing your reactivity, how it makes sense actually to be equanimous and not overwhelmed with wanting or loathing for any group of people or any individuals because everybody is really, really, really, in a very deep way, quite the same. Everybody wants to be happy; everyone wants to avoid suffering and that's the key to how we run our own lives.

So when we recognize that about ourselves, we know something pretty deep about others and it's a profound connection of sameness actually, that we, generally speaking, totally ignore.

Now the third step begins when we have actually identified, in our own experience, what our reactivity to equanimity is, our dislike, our distaste, our pride at having to affiliate with certain people or situations, our longing, our wanting, our craving, our idealization or attachment to certain types of people, our indifference to others. Now in actual practice, it's important to spend time with each of these. Today in our guided meditation, we will focus mainly on the person that we dislike because that's going to be easiest to get some type of reactivity. Once we are capable of really identifying this sensibility, then in the third step, the main thing that we're doing is just being aware of it and seeing how our

Anne C. Klein

Week 2, *Embodied Love: Core Tibetan Trainings for an Unbounded Heart*

August 11th, 2014

“Love”

awareness of our own reactivity, not our judgment of it, not our judgment, not our analysis, not our ideas, but our experience, the experience of this reaction that’s coming up.

“I don’t like this person. I don’t even want to think about this person, much less in my precious meditation time, when I’m supposed to be calming down. Well actually the whole process of meditation involves many things and it doesn’t always involve calming down. Sometimes it involves really getting in touch with things that are quite stirred up. Sorry, but that is the truth. If we want equanimity because we’ve had, in step one, enough of a taste of it, enough of a recognition of the wisdom and ease intrinsic to real evenness, so we’re inspired.

And we’re inspired enough to persevere, to persevere enough through step two, where we start to see our reactivity and step three where we actually just observe it, until something happens. Does it stay the same, that sense of annoyance, that tightening in your stomach, that arching of your neck? If you pay attention to it, what happens? There may be some shift, some shift and you experience, to some degree, release from that particular type of reaction. And in the fourth step, you sit in that state of release, however that is, and continue to pay attention to your experience. And you’re feeling some type of equanimity, some degree of it, for a bit and you just bring your attention to that and you gently wonder, with a beginner’s mind, “What is this equanimity?” and you seek to look at it, which you can’t exactly look at it.

And yet you’re there and it’s present and so you rest in that and you just rest in that. Very briefly, those are the four steps. What occurs over time, as a result of this, is twofold. You become more and more aware of your activity, your reactivity, your reactivity to those you like, your reactivity to those you don’t like, your reactivity to people, who cares, you don’t know them, that dullness, that indifference. And you begin to notice how these are just reactions, they’re not truths, they’re not your identity, they’re not the other person’s identity. It’s just stuff floating in the sky of your experience. It’s just clouds, it’s not sky. So maybe a little foolish to live our lives around these clouds, as if they were what was really us and the real thing, the real measure of what we are and can be. The real measure of what we are and can be, as we’ve already suggested, is immeasurable.

These are called, literally, the four immeasurables. They have no measure. They are boundless. Hatred, attachment—these are not boundless. They’re very focused on certain people, for a certain time. You can measure them. And then what happens slowly as we become free—this takes time. I’m going to suggest that after this fourfold sequence is over, that you take a month—ideally two months, six, eight weeks—for each of the immeasurables and really explore how you’re

Anne C. Klein

Week 2, *Embodied Love: Core Tibetan Trainings for an Unbounded Heart*

August 11th, 2014

“Love”

doing with them. In time, this reactivity begins to thin out. You have some experience of equanimity.

But like everything, until it's fully, fully realized, there is still the possibility that this equanimity will degenerate, get nixed in with its false, the great mimicker of equanimity, which we've already mentioned, which is indifference and neutrality. And in this way, we begin to see the kind of dialogue that goes on among these four because this particularly emphasized in Longchenpa, Longchen Rabjam, Jigme Lingpa after him, fourteenth and eighteenth century, great figures in the Nyingma tradition of Tibet. One of the things that they take that's quite particular about the way of looking at the four immeasurables is the way they are responses to possible degeneration in the cultivation of a quality like equanimity could become indifference, cultivate love.

Just as equanimity overcomes pride and obscuration, and has the near enemy of indifference, and will yield to the wisdom of sameness, as I'll talk about in the last session of these; the wisdom aspect I'll talk more about it in the fourth session. So love actually serves to overcome attachment—sorry. Love is going to be an antidote to indifference. Love is clearly not indifferent. So it is a kind of healing of whatever tendency toward indifference has cropped up while we have been cultivating equanimity. Love itself, just as equanimity's antidote to pride and obscuration, love of course is an antidote to, will overwhelm hatred.

So how do we cultivate love? How do we move from our ordinary indifference state or our ordinary prejudice, biased state to a state of boundless love? One of the reasons we began by cultivating equanimity, Longchenpa says that it's good for beginners to begin with equanimity, although there are different orders in which the four can be cultivated, really depending on where you are at. He says that those who are trained in <inaudible> and in a stage of creation phase of Tantra, for those of you are familiar with that, he suggests that such people begin with love, interestingly enough. My point here though is that—as we're cultivating equanimity, which is really the ground in which love can flourish—it is an evening out of our un-evened judgments, so that when we do build the great dimension of love, it will have a beaming light that shines through in all directions.

That's one of the reasons that one cultivates equanimity prior to cultivating love. We cultivate this love also in this context as a way to offset whatever state of indifference we might have fallen into. So that's what I mean: that there's a dynamic here; there's a kind of dialog going on between our practice of equanimity and our practice of love, of love and kindness. Love and kindness is

Anne C. Klein

Week 2, *Embodied Love: Core Tibetan Trainings for an Unbounded Heart*

August 11th, 2014

“Love”

most fundamentally described as the wish that everyone, including yourself, have happiness and the causes of happiness—that’s the intention of love.

So we have this intention and we want to know what love feels like. Just as we are able to cultivate equanimity, if we have been in the presence of someone who is regarding us and holding a space of equanimity in which we could pursue our own interests, so we can cultivate love when we have an experience, some experience, of having received kindness that we can tap into. That’s going to be our first step.

So let’s begin. Let’s do the rest of this as a guided meditation. And we take our seat, as before. Let your intention rest on your breath, feeling the energy coming in, the relaxation on the exhale, feeling the mutuality of relaxation giving rise to clarity, clarity giving rise to relaxation. When you are judging or hating, are you relaxed? When you become clear of those reactions, how is your capacity for relaxation affected? So you sit in the center of the earth, supported, letting your attention drop down to the center of your belly, feeling the alignment from the center of the earth to the center of your belly, to your solar plexus, to your heart, throat and crown.

And we can introduce an element of sound here. You might do this about five or six minutes into your 10 or 20 minutes of cultivating awareness, as the first part of your session. And just sound the sound, feeling that the sound is coming from the center of your body here and the light, in this case the luminosity, and clarity of love itself is expanding to every cell in your body. It’s a way to remind yourself that you’re in your body, that your body has support and information for you that will be useful in this practice.

And take a moment to recall a kindness that you received from anyone, family; a small gift, a smile, not something that rocked your world, something that you can remember with quite delight and an experience, gently, how that felt to you, that experience of receiving love. So this is the first step, just touching into that, aspiring to connect more deeply with love and kindness towards yourself, toward all living beings, without exception, as impossible as that might seem to you now. Perhaps you’re willing to aspire to it or at least entertain it, something maybe that could come to pass. And as you consider this, we segway naturally to the second step of, “And what is your reaction?” When somebody directs a loving gesture towards you, even if it’s just a smile, looking directly in your eyes or a surprise, your favorite dessert, flowers, just a phone call asking how something important to you has gone, do you receive that kindness? Do you turn away from it? Do you go into a shell and say, “I didn’t deserve that?” or “They didn’t really mean it” or “This is too distracting” or “This is too intimate or threatening?”

Anne C. Klein

Week 2, *Embodied Love: Core Tibetan Trainings for an Unbounded Heart*

August 11th, 2014

“Love”

We do have these kinds of reactions. Anything short of just being open to give and receive love is some kind of reaction. It's not the practice, it's your reaction and your reaction is very significant to notice, as coming up in the practice. So let's just say someone gives you a big smile one day and you're not feeling like engaging and you turn away. What's there? Maybe there's some fear—fear that this person will just invade you and overwhelm you, fear that if you really allow the connection to unfold, you will be discovered wanting, in the light of this love that this person or this kindness that this person was extending to you. And that this fear knots up your stomach, tenses your shoulder, scrunches your neck, furrows your brow, makes you sleepy, makes you want to rush out and party so you don't have to pay attention to anything, just be drowned in loud music or some other addictive situation, where you're basically tuning everything out.

So you notice that reaction, a lot of reactions. Pick one. Stay with it. And we get to the third step and you just observe it: “Here I am, something is, someone is coming at me with this lovely energy and I'm ducking.” What does that feel like? These are subtle things. They're not so easy to catch. “I believe in love, I believe it's a good quality to embody, but if I can't receive it, I can't offer it. If I can't offer it, I can't receive it.” So I'm getting to know myself here around issues that I might have about love and kindness and really is just being like a running stream, open. There's a water element, just floating and moving, as is required, no problem.

So then over time—weeks, months, years—you get more and more of a feeling, “Well, this love, yes, the pattern is falling away. I can feel it. I can allow it. I can allow it to come in. I can allow it to go out. I'm not afraid. I'm not afraid of being overwhelmed. I'm not afraid of overwhelming.” It's just fine, it's fresh water everywhere, it's lovely and then you just sit in that and just feel that. Don't get tied up in your intellect, just feel it, just feel it. And let your awareness be with love and what is this love? It's not an intellectual question. And just look at it.

You can't exactly see anything, and yet there you are and there it is. And you just rest in that. And then in closing—and do that for a few minutes—it's always important to take some minutes at the end of a session and just sit and be there. You're not trying to do anything, to make anything happen, to pat yourself on the back, to scold, to judge yourself, nothing. You're just there. This is how your body, energy, being can digest your practice. And we can close the session with a very open sound of “Ah,” again coming from your heart. This time going out into the whole world, extending this love and kindness that you are beginning to taste, not imagine, but taste. And sending it out into the whole world and dedicating your practice in that way and any other dedication prayers that you know or customs or dedication that you have, then engage in it at this time.

Anne C. Klein

Week 2, *Embodied Love: Core Tibetan Trainings for an Unbounded Heart*

August 11th, 2014

“Love”

So we'll close our session with that “Ah.” May you digest well and this is your homework for next week: to continue exploring. Continue a bit to review equanimity and also take up this practice of love. If you have questions, we will be in touch over the web. Have a good week.