

Lama Surya Das
Week Two, *From Me to We*
June 8, 2015
“Inter-Meditation: How to Co-Meditate with Everyone and Everything”
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“Make Me One with Everything,” the title of this online course or retreat, and the title of my book, is really the punchline of a joke. The joke’s been around for a while. Maybe you’ve heard it? I think there are some profound meanings and levels to it, too. The Dalai Lama, who visits here quite regularly, and will be visiting New York City and California in July, for his eightieth birthday, is in the story. As the story goes, he was in the Bronx one day and he stopped for a snack at a hotdog vendor on the street, and he said, “Make me one with everything.” So that’s the joke.

Of course, that’s a spiritual aspiration many of us share. I’ve added a few extra innings and we’ll talk about these different levels for separation, aspiration, and the importance of intention and motivation in this retreat.

Anyway, so the hotdog vendor in his white t-shirt and his apron starts slathering up a hot dog with all the extras, and pouring on the mustard and sauce, and sauerkraut and relish. He hands it over to the maroon robed Dalai Lama, and the monk hands over a sawbuck, which is what we call a twenty dollar bill in Brooklyn. Then there’s a pregnant pause. Are they meditating? Is this a misunderstanding? A hotdog can’t cost twenty bucks. Are they having a staring contest? Finally, the Dalai Lama gives—he speaks up, he breaks the silence. “What, no change,” the master says. The hotdog vendor replies, “Change must come from within.” So that’s the joke. That’s not too shabby. I made that up. Don’t you wonder where jokes come from? Yes, we can all do it. It’s fun.

Anyway, this is not the end. This is the beginning of our online retreat today. So join me, let’s join together on this joyous path of inter-meditation, shared spirituality, and awakening together for a beautiful world and a beautiful life. Going from me-ditation to we-ditation. Emaho.

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Breathing in and breathing out. How sweet it is being with it rather than against it. Everything is part of it. *Emaho*. This joyous inter-meditation, inter-being together.

So take a breath, take a break, and welcome to the second week of Tricycle’s online retreat, based on my book, *Make Me One with Everything*. We’ll be seeing through the illusion of separateness, learning how to co-meditate, to be with it rather than against it, whatever it is. In every moment of life, this moment, only moment, the joyous moment. Learning the joy of meditation, of co-meditating together, not the chore, spiritual penance, or difficulty, even three seconds hugging could be enough.

So right now just breathe, relax, and smile, and co-meditate with me. The lights are on but nobody is home. We can just be ourselves for the moment. Let your hair down if you have any, or let your tense facial muscles, neck muscles, shoulder muscles, cheek muscles, etcetera, down. We all have those.

Breathe, relax, and smile, three steps to instant meditation, co-meditating with the breath together. Breathe, relax, center, focus, and smile to tease it out a bit, no big deal, and enjoy the joy of co-meditation. Being with it rather than against it. This is the practice where we don’t really have to try to get into the ‘flow Joe’ as they say. We recognize the flow going through us all together right now. Riding the breath, breathing in and breathing out, breathing in and out. The energy, the universe, *prana*, subtle energy, all expanding and dissolving almost co-simultaneously, it’s marvelous.

This—it’s simple but it’s not necessarily easy. It’s not simplistic. It will make you a simpleton. This is incredibly, unbelievably profound, the principle of co-meditation. Being with, meditating with it, everything is support or nourishment for the naked, empty, or clear selfless present awareness: now-ness, awareness, mindfulness, incandescent presence, just being, whatever we call it.

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In this practice we learn to deal with difficulties, with daily life issues. To not just get away from it all, but to walk fearlessly straightforwardly into the shining waves. For example, this morning I was sitting by the river. I like to co-meditate with water. As I mentioned last week, that’s my element. It’s the water goddess, *Mamaki*, as we call it in Tibetan. The flow, the clear, ripples endlessly interlocking, never stopping, really, and just dissolving effortlessly, not solidifying, not contracting inward, just releasing with the breath. As if it were the outer breath which is oxygenation and the inner-breath of energy, of just letting your energy go and flow through your cosmic energy. This flows through us every moment; you don’t have to make it happen.

Outer-breath, oxygen and carbon dioxide processing, is easy to understand. Inner-breath, energy, is more concentric. The heart is centered like a bellows, like a mandala, a great sacred circle. It is opening and closing like the diaphragm of the universe, merging and dissolving with the waves. These are the waves of water, the waves of wind, the waves of breath. They happen every moment that the changes occur, with whatever you’re meditating. They are dissolving and connecting, comingling, converg-itating at the same time, communing with our deepest true self.

So for today’s retreat we’ll go more into relationships, shared awakening, couple’s spirituality, and spirituality for couples. We can practice meditating together, sitting together, or walking together. Silent nature walks are a great natural co-mediation beyond ordinary notions of just sitting quietly and closing our eyes and trying to go inward and not be distracted. That’s fine, but now we’re talking about inter-meditation, shared spirituality. You can try a nature walk, or just shared silence for a period of time. It could be a minute, five minutes, an hour, half a day on Sunday, two hours, or a little mini retreat. This can be a mini vacation from our persona, from the games we play from our defense mechanisms, where we can just be. We let it all be, and go beyond our egotistic bubble or sets of separateness. We are not withdrawing into our cocooned egocentricity or selfishness, self-centeredness, narcissism even, but breathing out and releasing.

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How about trying eye gazing. Try it even with me right now. Not mesmerizing or hypnotizing, just eye gazing, like looking into the mirror of the soul, of the selfless self beyond separateness, unitary vision. Go beyond such concepts, just breathing out, breathing and eye gazing. Or try it with a partner, a loved one, a trusted one. So beautiful, so natural, so freeing.

Yes, it can also be challenging to be that present, focused, or intense. We’re dealing with difficulties in this session. We’re not just taking the easy way of relaxation like we’re lying down in a hammock and taking a nap. Just letting go is really the great relaxation, and we can let go into and just be our self, not our separate ego self, our small bubble like contracted hardboiled eggness, but like the bubble in the sea. We see through our separateness and are free. The bubble doesn’t have to burst or die to return to the sea. This is a unitary vision, a unity vision we’re talking about, friends. It’s not simplistic at all.

We can do this with a partner, sitting or standing, facing each other, eye gazing, breathing together. We can even synchronize our breath. I’ve written this out. You can practice this, breathing in and out together, feeling, not talking. There are so many other levels of communication, communing, and merg-itation in this kind of simple couple’s practice.

This is part of the practice of tantra, of sacred sexuality. It is transforming passion, transmuting passion into compassion, using the energy or the fire, the rocket fuel that sometimes burns us to propel our spiritual direction, our highest aspirations and awareness beyond our limited selves. Sex is a good example of this. Another example is dancing as if no one’s watching.

So nothing is precluded from being part of this integrative path of inter-meditation, co-meditation.

Of course the challenge comes if we’re having relational difficulties. How do we co-meditate, commune, and resonate together when we’re at odds? That is a great challenge, and for that, we

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might need to take a more active role. We might really talk it out, or practice nonaggressive mindful anger management and other things that I teach in the book more in detail. We learn how to get from me and you to the shared country of we.

Perhaps we need couple’s therapy, which could also be a good co-meditation. Why not? It could be helpful. It could save our marriage and save our family from unnecessary strife and disaster. Of course everything changes in life, but how we deal with it makes all the difference. Check it out, don’t take my word for it. This includes relationships and families. All that are gathered might be parted by death, if not by divorce or separation, or other crises.

It’s not what happens to us, but how we relate to things that makes all the difference. That is another level, a more inner secret subtle level of relationships. How we relate to whatever arises in our body—feelings, sensations, difficulties, illnesses, pains—and what arises in our mind—thoughts, feelings, difficult memories, anger, desire, doubt, loneliness—how we relate to things makes all the difference.

So here we’re learning how to inter-meditate with our feelings as well. This is our inner world, the inner weather, the weather of our moods and feelings. We are learning to embrace the difficult feelings, not just reject them, suppress or oppress them, or try to avoid pain or difficulty at all costs. Instead, we are learning how to embrace the difficult feelings and experiences. This is like cradling a child when they’re having a tantrum. We still love the child, even though we don’t like the tantrum and wish it would end. We love the child and we cradle them. Even if they puke on our shoulder we still hold them. We stay up all night with a colicky sick child. We don’t like it, but we love them. Love is bigger than the polarities of like and dislike. This cannot be reemphasized enough.

So this is how we see through the separation, for example, the mind-made separation between ourselves and others, or those we like and don’t like, or feelings and things, or parts of ourselves

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that we like or don't like. This is how we become more resilient, centered, accepting. This is how we can practice radical acceptance, as Tara Brach talks about in her brilliant book, “Radical Acceptance.” How we can practice mindful emotional management and healthy emotional processing, and not just be a control freak? Not overcompensating to insulate ourselves from difficult emotions, but cradling the difficult emotions in spacious, nonjudgmental awareness. We call this mindfulness, breathing into it and releasing.

This breathing in and breathing out allows us to let things process through us. It happens at home, or when we're talking about intimate relations, or children, or things at work with our difficult colleagues, bosses, or employees. This applies to whatever our difficulties or challenges may be in this hurly burly world that we live in. Of course we can talk about how, “when I get clearer everything becomes clearer.” That's an important principle of any kind of awareness practice of meditation. But how are we going to deal with things when we are not that clear? How are we going to relate to ourselves when we are not at our best?

Let's not talk about other people. That's a challenge. When we breathe and feel that, and relax and allow it to be, there's a tremendous relief. It is the wisdom of allowing, of not being so perfectionistic, not being over-demanding. So again, breathe it in and breathe it out, and let go in the present moment, and know that this moment is the only moment for now. Because now-ness awareness and this great acceptance and equanimity is the ultimate therapy. It is reconditioning and deconditioning, freeing us from conditioning, actually, so that we can breathe it in and breathe it out. We can release and relax and be so present that we're not preoccupied with past worries or disappointments, or future anxieties or fantasies. We can just be so incandescently present that we relate to everything objectively, with great clarity, wisdom, and discernment. We are curious, friendly, open, and we are letting it in and also letting it out. We are letting things come and go as they do anyway because that's the universal law, that's the principle of inter-meditation. We are inseparable from one and everything.

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As Buddha said, “This worldly life is full of all kinds of things, especially suffering and dissatisfaction. We can choose to embrace the suffering, not encouraging it, embrace it and recognize this too shall pass, definitely lightening and brightening up, lightening up while enlightening up, this is the joy of co-meditation.”

So for homework, I'd like you to take home this practice of breathing in and breathing out. Ride the breath with your attention, pay attention to the breath, breathe out and let go of other preoccupations and thoughts. Breathe, relax, and smile, as I said in the beginning. Breathe in, dissolve, and let go. Feel the physical sensations, and just rest in the oasis of feeling for a moment. Feeling is healing. Do not try to change or to get rid of it. Practice this great equanimity, this radical acceptance, this unity vision, meditating with, being with this great communion or communion. You are inseparable from whatever arises, flowing with the go, not stressing to get into the flow, because the flow goes through us every moment.

May whatever sterling aspirations and practices we've joined together here today, plant the seeds of enlightenment. May it plant the seeds of lightening up, of alleviating suffering and bringing peace and happiness to all beings so we may altogether complete the spiritual journey. The journey is one circle, one mandala, one sangha, one beloved community. See the light, the divine, the Buddha-ness in everyone and everything. *Svaha*. Joyous awakening. Awakening now.