

## **EVENING DAY THREE**

### **COMPASSION AND LOVINGKINDNESS TALK AND GUIDED MEDITATION**

Tonight we will be having a talk, a guided meditation and then a little finishing talk at the end. The talks and the guided meditation will be concerned with understanding the importance of Compassion and Lovingkindness, and the learning of some methods by which we can help Compassion and Lovingkindness to grow within ourselves.

On the first day of the retreat, I talked about a relationship that followed like this:

First we see a problem or difficulty, something unsatisfactory. Then we wish to alleviate the problem or remove its cause. This is the arising of Compassion. Then we may wish for happiness to replace the unhappiness. This we refer to as the arising of Lovingkindness.

With our thoughts of Compassion and Lovingkindness, we then try to use Mindfulness to be able to understand the problem or difficulty. When we understand the situation well enough, we then can apply our Understanding to the situation and alleviate the difficulty or remove its cause.

I would like to explain this relationship in more detail. As I mentioned in the beginning talk, for all of us there occur things in life that are not totally satisfactory. These occurrences can be physical or mental. They can range in intensity from only a slight irritation to major suffering. From time to time each of us is confronted with experiences in life that are not totally satisfying.

Chances are that for each of us, there has developed an awareness of some thing or possibly many things that are unsatisfactory in life, and we have the wish to improve these things. Perhaps we have tried to ignore them and have seen that this was not a good enough method. Perhaps we have tried to escape from them and have seen that this also was not a sufficient method.

So here we are at a meditation retreat trying to learn methods that will be more successful. Methods that will help us to learn how to deal with the continual changes in life's situations and our reactions to them. This development of our minds can provide the basis for more Peace and Happiness within ourselves that need not be dependent on external conditions.

It does not matter whether our life has had a great amount of satisfaction or a small amount. It does not matter whether our life has had a great amount of dissatisfaction or a small amount. Each of us, in our own way, wishes to deal with the unsatisfying aspects of life, and find more inner Peace and Contentment. Seeing of the difficulties, problems, etc. and wanting to solve them or remove their causes; this, we have said, is an arising of Compassion.

Compassion, as used here, means a feeling of sympathy toward ourselves or others who are experiencing some type of difficulty. Compassion is a softness, a tender heart that is sympathetic and willing to open to all of life. But at the same time, it possesses a strength that is not weighed down by difficulties or sorrows. A tender heart that sees that there are difficulties and wishes to help in some way.

In many dictionaries, Compassion is defined as "a feeling of deep sympathy or sorrow for another who is stricken by suffering or misfortune, accompanied by a strong desire to alleviate the pain or remove its cause."

For purposes here, we will slightly adjust this definition in two ways. First, to feel the sorrow of an occasion may be beneficial at times, but to be weighed down by it is not. That is, it is better to identify

with the difficulty yet to maintain a degree of Equanimity and strength to deal with the situation, for it is only through dealing with the situation calmly and wisely that will produce the best results. If everyone merely feels the sorrow and is weighed down by it, then the best solution will be hard to find.

Secondly, to have Compassion only for others does not include everyone. If one takes a broad view of life, it is fairly obvious to see that separation, change and death are universal. Each of us has misfortunes, difficulties and obstacles. All of us encounter the impermanence of life and things that are unsatisfactory. Our bodies occasionally will get sick or injured. If we live long enough, our bodies will become weak, possibly feeble. We often are separated from what we like. We often have to be with what we do not want to be with. And often, we simply do not get what we want. These things are just facts of life.

In this way, we are not separate from others but interrelated. Each of us is another human being who needs Compassion. So it is important to include having Compassion for ourselves as well as for others.

It also is important to make a distinction between Compassion, as used here, and the word "pity." Although these words often are used interchangeably, pity, in its actual application, frequently indicates a distance between oneself and those who have problems.

Pity can fall short of opening and seeing the interrelationship of human beings, and the universal aspect of impermanence. It can be as if one is in a separate bubble, unaffected by life. Many times, pity is from the outside, looking at them over there.

Compassion is from the inside. Compassion can be the breaking down of this separate bubble, thus creating a feeling of connection instead of separation.

When there is the arising of Compassion with the wish to alleviate difficulties or remove their causes, there often follows a wish for Happiness. This is a very important point for all of us. What is the best thing that we can wish for ourselves or for others in order to have Happiness?

Money? Cars? Houses? Clothes? Food? These things are very beneficial but they are limited in their ability to give Happiness. Going beyond the limitations of material objects lies the most important thing.

It is having Peace of Mind: the strengths, the characteristics, the abilities of mind that can cope with any difficulty and not be adversely affected. This is the most important thing we could wish for.

There are many, many wealthy people who have many, many material comforts who are not happy and peaceful. And there are many, many poorer people with much fewer material comforts who are happy and peaceful. If material wealth could always produce happiness, then this situation, of an unhappy rich person and a happy poor person, could not happen. But material wealth cannot always produce happiness. Indeed, material wealth can be very beneficial, but it is limited in its ability to give people Peace and Happiness.

If we develop the mind with methods, techniques and tools of Mental Development that can enable us to cope with, understand and deal successfully with any experience that we encounter, then we can gain the ability to have Peace and Happiness, whether we are rich or poor, famous or obscure, healthy or sick, young or old, and so on.

If we have developed our mind in beneficial ways, then our problems and difficulties can cease to be problems and difficulties. Instead, we can view them as opportunities to grow in Understanding. One story that may illustrate this point is about a manager of a large and famous hotel. The hotel and its staff were noted for their outstanding service. The manager was being interviewed once and was asked by a reporter, "What do you do when you have problems?"

The manager replied, "Here at this hotel we have no problems. Here at this hotel, we have only challenges."

With the development of the mind, each of us can turn our problems into challenges. This is the best method of dealing with the unsatisfying aspects of life; to develop the mind in beneficial ways.

As I said before, Lovingkindness, as used here, means a wish for Happiness for ourselves and others, often following or connected to the compassionate wish to solve difficulties. The strong connection that can exist between Compassion and Lovingkindness can be understood with the help of the following example.

If a wise, mature parent were to walk into the child's room while a child was peacefully sleeping and look upon the peaceful, sleeping face, then the parent might be filled with compassionate thoughts, such as realizing that the child will have difficulties, obstacles and challenges in life.

And then a wise, mature parent might be filled with Lovingkind thoughts, such as wishing that the child will have the ability to develop in beneficial qualities to be able to cope with, understand and successfully deal with difficulties, obstacles and challenges in life.

The development of Compassion and Lovingkindness has many benefits. One of the most important is that this development will help to overcome anger and aversion, irritation and annoyances. Anger, aversion, irritation, annoyances, etc. are states of mind that often cause difficulty for ourselves and others. These are frequently prime reasons for wars, killings, persecutions, beatings, thefts, confiscations, suppressions, annihilations, and so on. All types of hatreds and prejudices cause so much difficulty for all of us.

It is easy to see the difficulties that aversion causes for others. But it is not always so easy to see the difficulties that we cause ourselves by being angry.

Most of the time, it is fairly obvious that if a person allows their anger to develop into some type of violence, then it will normally cause difficulties for that angry person. As well, when something happens that causes us to get angry or irritated, by getting angry or irritated we actually create an emotional state that gets in the way of clear thinking. And it is only through clear thinking that the best solution to the problem can come about.

But what about when someone is angry or irritated and does not show it outwardly? Some people will hold onto grudges and grievances for days, weeks, years. Most of us have done this to some degree.

Often the story is the same: Someone did something that we did not like. We got angry but we controlled any physical or vocal response. Later, we recreate the incident in our mind over and over, recalling how stupid the other person was, and often wishing bad things to happen to the other person. Minutes are wasted fuming, hours are wasted, days are wasted. Some people will waste months and years building aversion inside toward some person for some event that happened a long time ago. Sadly enough, some people hold onto these aversions for the rest of their lives.

What is the result if we hold onto some past incident in this way? Pain ... mental pain ... mental pain for ourselves. The other person goes on living their life. We go on recreating a past incident with our "super-righteous" attitude, all the time just breeding more anger within ourselves. Pain. Mental pain.

It has been said that having anger toward someone is like picking up a red-hot coal with the intention of throwing it at that person. But instead, the red-hot coal burns the hand that grabs it. There is no peace in the mind, only burning, causing problems for ourselves.

We do not have to act like this. The development of Compassion and Lovingkindness can help to overcome anger, aversion, irritation, annoyances, and so on. From the large to the small, all of our dislikes will decrease as Compassion and Lovingkindness grow. Anger and aversion are opposite states of mind to Compassion and Lovingkindness. They cannot exist together at the same time. It is not too difficult to understand that if we could lessen the angers and aversions that we have in our life, that this would be a major step in finding deeper Peace and Happiness.

So we see problems and difficulties. Compassion arises toward the problems and difficulties. Lovingkindness may also arise wishing for Peace and Happiness to replace the problems and difficulties. Now, with thoughts of Compassion and Lovingkindness, we try to apply Mindfulness as our tool.

Mindfulness or Awareness. Being mindful, being aware. Knowing what you are doing, knowing what you are saying, knowing what you are thinking. Causing fewer mistakes and less problems for yourself and for others.

Compassion and Lovingkindness are deeply related to Mindfulness. We could say that they can "feed" the growth of each other. Mindfulness, used in this way to lessen difficulties, is obviously a method by which Compassion and Lovingkindness are put into action. By observing closely, we can see where and when difficulties arise and what factors bring them about, and thus discover ways to avoid similar difficulties in the future.

As we said before, the different steps of the growth of Mindfulness can be seen in this way. When you have done something and you realize, afterward, that it would have been better not to have done it; that is one step in being aware, being mindful; realizing after the fact and seeing what has happened. The same types of events often happen again and again.

The more you realize afterward what has happened, the more your Mindfulness will grow. At some time, you will find your Awareness of the same type of event begins to come about while the event is happening. And you may be able to use your past knowledge to help you get out of the situation better than previously.

At some time later, you will find your Awareness comes about when the situation begins to happen. Then you will be in a much better position to utilize your Understanding and possibly avoid much of the difficulty that may follow.

Later, when your Awareness is strong enough, you will actually be able to see when the event may happen and be able to avoid it entirely.

By developing stronger and stronger Mindfulness, our Understanding will grow concerning our difficulties, problems, irritations, annoyances and all types of experiences that we normally consider unsatisfying.

We then will be able to understand when a problem exists or when a problem does not exist. We will be able to understand how the problem comes about and how it goes away. And, most importantly, we will understand how the problem will not arise in the future. Then we can apply this Understanding to our problems and difficulties, and work to alleviate them or remove their causes.

As this type of Compassionate Understanding grows, the wish and the ability to reduce difficulties for ourselves and others also will grow. By practicing in this way, we will then gain more and more Peace and Contentment, and be able to help others gain more and more Peace and Contentment also.

By now, hopefully, all of you have developed a clear understanding of how important Compassion and Lovingkindness are in dealing with the unsatisfactory experiences with which we are continually confronted throughout our lives. Without any Compassion and Lovingkindness toward problems and difficulties, there may be no wish to solve the problems and difficulties. There may be little, if any, desire to practice Mindfulness, and Understanding would be difficult to develop.

What will follow shortly is a guided meditation which can aid us in our growth of Compassion and Lovingkindness. This guided meditation is a type of reflective, contemplative meditation, using thought. It is primarily concerned with the development of Compassion and Lovingkindness. However, one can easily see how Mindfulness and Understanding are beneficial supports.

Awareness of the breath will be used only for the beginning moments of the meditation. Then as soon as I start to talk, let go of the breath and listen to what is being said. There will be several things talked about and several instructions. There will also be periods of quiet. During the quiet periods, try to think about whatever was just mentioned; reflect, contemplate and/or visualize the situations and possible responses of the people involved.

Occasionally there are parts of this meditation that produce odd responses in some people. If you happen to have any odd or difficult response, please try to become aware of this response as to how your mind reacts and how your body reacts. This awareness of your thoughts and body can be a valuable aid in developing Compassion and Lovingkindness.

Keep in mind that your body and breath may react certain ways when the mind is stimulated and other ways when peaceful. Knowledge of these physical reactions is very valuable. So if you feel somewhat uncomfortable with parts of this meditation, then please try to become aware of this uncomfortable feeling both in the mind and in the body. Once you have noted this response, then please continue with the meditation.

**SPECIAL NOTE FOR THE BOOK:** Reading a guided meditation of this type is probably not as good as listening to it, especially during a meditation retreat, but the following may be helpful to get the most benefit.

When rested, set aside 20-30 minutes, possibly more, and try to arrange matters so that you will not be interrupted.

As you read through this, when you come to a "\*\*\*\*\*", please shut your eyes and reflect, contemplate, think about whatever you just read. It may also help to try to visualize the situations mentioned and the responses of people involved.

Although the talk had set time spacing, it is not practical, when reading, to try to time yourself. At each "\*\*\*\*\*" the time may vary that you wish to use. Sometimes 10-15 seconds will be enough, and at other times you may use a minute or more. Try to take your time; there is no rush.

Have two blank pieces of paper or cardboard at least as big as a page of this book. Use them to block out each page, moving it down the page that you are reading line by line and stopping at each "\*\*\*\*\*". This will help in two ways. First, by not encouraging the disturbance of your train of thought by seeing what is written later, and second, it will serve to keep your place when you shut your eyes.

SPECIAL NOTE: It is not advised to read the following without first having read all of the previous pages of this book, for your own benefit in understanding.

**A reflective, contemplative meditation  
concerned with helping to develop  
Compassion and Lovingkindness**

Please breathe calmly for a short while, trying just to be aware of the breath, coming in and going out or rising and falling.

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Now try to identify with this situation:

A family of two parents and three children are living comfortably in a suburb of a big city. The working parent has a good enough job so that things go smoothly for all. The family is very happy. One day the worker goes to work and just prior to lunch, gets a promotion. At the same time, a bad fire occurs at home destroying the house, killing the other parent and all three children. Unknowingly, the worker goes home at lunch to tell the family the great news of promotion.

\*\*\*\*\*

Now try to put yourself in the worker's position. Try to feel as the worker would driving up to your house with this great news, only to see a complete disaster and all of your family killed.

\*\*\*\*\*

Try to feel with this pain.

\*\*\*\*\*

Great news of promotion? Not very important now.

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Heaviness. Sadness. Maybe tight stomach. Maybe lump in the throat. Maybe heavy chest. Soft eyes. Maybe something in the lips.

\*\*\*\*\*

Try to raise a feeling inside for this person and this very sad occasion.

\*\*\*\*\*

Many in the world feel a lot of pity for others with problems, especially extreme suffering such as this. But pity can be cold. Pity can be from the outside, looking at "them over there." Try to get inside. Try

to get to the feeling of Compassion. Try to let go of some of your conditioning and get to this feeling for this person.

\*\*\*\*\*

A deep feeling of wishing you could help. Wishing things could be different. This is a reaction to an unpleasant situation. Identifying with, then feeling with the pain and reacting; this can be an aspect of Compassion.

\*\*\*\*\*

Out of this Compassion, can come the hope, the wish of Lovingkindness. That this person will be able, one day, to find peace of mind after such tremendous difficulty. Not that this person will get married again and have three more children and a new house. But that this person will find peace of mind. Through some mental development, be able to cope with, understand and accept what has happened.

Try to wish this person that type of Lovingkindness.

\*\*\*\*\*

May this person, one day, be able to learn, practice and develop methods, techniques, and tools of mental development, so that they can cope with, understand, accept and overcome the difficulties and challenges of life.

May this person find peace of mind.

\*\*\*\*\*

Now try to identify with another situation:

Two best young friends, we will call Jim and Tom, are out for the evening, doing what for many young friends is quite common. Nothing in particular, having a nice time at a beach disco.

They go out on the pier in a happy mood, feeling good and joking. In the sense of the words, having a good harmless time. Then, jokingly, Jim teases Tom by almost pushing Tom over the pier into the water. But, in reacting, Tom slips and falls in anyway. Although a good swimmer, Tom was not moving much. Jim jumped in and helped Tom to shore, only to discover that Tom was now a paraplegic. Paralyzed.

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Try to feel with the pain of this situation.

\*\*\*\*\*

Best friends. Happy evening. One has now caused the other to become a paraplegic. Paralyzed.

\*\*\*\*\*

Try to get to that heavy feeling inside.

\*\*\*\*\*

Something very difficult has happened to both Tom and Jim. This bad accident that has happened to Tom is extremely sad. But, for now, please focus your attention on Jim. Jim has just caused his best friend to become paralyzed. The guilt and self-hatred are vast ... enormous ... huge.  
Feel with Jim.

\*\*\*\*\*

Try to feel with this pain.

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Try to feel Compassion for Jim.

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Now let the feeling, the wish, the hope arise that Jim will someday find some tools of mental development to be able to cope with, understand and accept what has happened. And, in Jim's case, that this mental development will also enable Jim to forgive himself, as he will have enormous guilt and self-hatred.

Let this wish, this Lovingkindness, warm feeling rise within you for Jim.

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This is a different feeling from Compassion. This is a feeling that can wipe away tears. That there are tools of mental development that can help.

And that Jim will one day learn these tools.

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May Jim, one day, be able to learn, practice and develop methods, techniques, and tools of mental development, so that he can cope with, understand, accept and overcome the difficulties and challenges of life.

May Jim find peace of mind.

\*\*\*\*\*

Now please consider another situation

This one concerns you and another person. This person is obnoxious, very disturbing, a gossip, a braggart, a bully, a cheat, a liar, or whatever else that you do not like. Most of us have known someone whom we did not like. Someone who did something unkind to us.

Try now to remember a difficult person in your past. Try to remember an exact occasion when this person did something unkind to you.

Try now to get back the feelings you had then.

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Dislike, irritation, anger, hatred, wishing bad things for that person.

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Try to get to that feeling. Try to get to that hatred.

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For some of you this may be difficult. For others easy. Try to get to that feeling of dislike for that person who did something unkind to you.

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You probably had this feeling as a child. Try to remember. Like Compassion, this feeling of aversion can often have physical reactions as well. Maybe tenseness, maybe changes in the heartbeat, in the breath, the face, the mouth, the teeth.

Try to experience all that you can of this hatred, aversion, dislike.

\*\*\*\*\*

Now I have had a few difficult people in my past. Consider this one:

I have not seen this person since high school. Several years ago I was told that this person had tried to commit suicide twice. I was told about the upbringing at home, the family life and how bad it was. The parents had great difficulties. Other siblings also grew into sad, miserable people. The details are unimportant. Perhaps you know similar people.

\*\*\*\*\*

How can I hate my difficult person knowing this?

How can I hate my other difficult people considering this?

Let your hatred give way to Compassionate Understanding. That your difficult people are probably similar to mine, perhaps messed up, perhaps confused. With little understanding of how to bring peace and happiness to themselves or others, unable to control their reactions to life, and often isolated, alone.

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This can be difficult. If so, try not to worry. Try to get some of that same feeling that you had a few minutes ago toward the worker and Jim.

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Do not force it. It might not be able to come yet. The aversion can be strong. If you continue to develop your mind wisely, the aversion will weaken, the Compassion will grow.

Try to bring forth some Compassion for your difficult person.

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Having understood more now about your difficult person's pains and difficulties, try now to let the wish of Lovingkindness arise; Lovingkindness toward a confused person. With Compassionate Understanding, how can you wish anything else, except that peace of mind will arise and this person will cease to be a problem for other people.

The wish that your difficult person will be able to achieve some mental development so that they can cope with, understand and accept the difficulties of life.

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May this person one day, be able to learn, practice and develop methods, techniques, and tools of mental development, so that they can cope with, understand, accept and overcome the difficulties and challenges of life.  
May they find peace of mind.

\*\*\*\*\*

Now it is possible that you have met people who are opposite to this. People who are always kind and nice to be with. It only takes a little bit of understanding the mind to know that unless these people are perfect human beings, then they, too, have some difficulties, pains or obstacles. Although perhaps only minor problems for most people; to them, they may consider it to be a major difficulty. Try now to bring forth some Compassion for these people. People whom you know who are nice and kind. Inwardly at times, you may be somewhat envious of them, but consider this:  
They, like you, are still having some difficulties.  
They, like you, are still traveling the path of mental development.  
They, like you, may stumble and fall.  
They, like you, may have obstacles and problems in finding total peace of mind.  
They, too, need Compassion and the wish of Lovingkindness. So try now to raise some Compassion for them and then try to wish to them that they will be able to cope with, understand and accept their difficulties of life.

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May these people perfect their learning, practicing and developing of methods, techniques, and tools of mental development, so that they can cope with, understand, accept and overcome the difficulties and challenges of life.  
May these people find peace of mind.

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Now, try to bring forth Compassion for your parents or the person(s) who were your substitute parent(s). Try to identify with the difficulties that they had.  
Try to understand how hard things may have been for them. Most likely they did not have a University degree in parenthood. They probably did not know everything and they probably made many mistakes.  
Try to get to that deeper feeling of Compassion for them.

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There was probably at least one occasion when you were punished and yet you did not even know what you had done wrong. And, possibly, you did not even do anything wrong.  
Can you have Compassionate Understanding to realize that your parents or substitute parents were limited in their own mental development?  
And like most of us, with limited mental development, we will make mistakes.

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Now, with this understanding, try to bring forth the wish of Lovingkindness towards your parents or substitute parents. Wish them that very great wish that they will be able to learn and develop methods

of mental development so that they can cope with, understand and accept the difficulties of life. And find peace of mind.

Try to wish this Lovingkindness towards them.

\*\*\*\*\*

May my parents be able to learn, practice and develop methods, techniques, and tools of mental development, so that they can cope with, understand, accept and overcome the difficulties and challenges of life.

May my parents find peace of mind.

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Take the next few moments to consider one or more of your friends. Try to raise some Compassion for them and then the wish of Lovingkindness.

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May my friends be able to learn, practice and develop methods, techniques, and tools of mental development, so that they can cope with, understand, accept and overcome the difficulties and challenges of life.

May my friends find peace of mind.

\*\*\*\*\*

Through practice and experience, you probably will find that there is one person for whom you have the most difficulty raising Compassion and Lovingkindness. For many, if not all of you, you will discover that this person is yourself.

You know everything that you have done.

You know all of the kind, beneficial things that you have done.

And you know all of the unkind, unbeneficial things that you have done.

For many of us, the unkind things play a greater role in our memory. We tend to shy away from thinking about the kind things that we have done. This way of thinking can bring about some major obstacles, such as feelings of guilt, self-hatred, unworthiness, doubt, self-pity, inferiority and many more.

Take a look at your past now, and try to bring to mind some of these unkind things that you have done; things that most of us do not really like looking at too closely.

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We have probably all done something that we are not happy about. Stole something. Cheated someone. Lied about something. Even those unkind thoughts that we have had towards someone. Try to think about some of these things.

\*\*\*\*\*

We may have acted like some of the people that we ourselves dislike. Doing something unkind to others.

\*\*\*\*\*

Unpleasant feelings may be arising. If so, examine them. There may be difficulty here. Note your physical reactions, the body, the face, the breath.

\*\*\*\*\*

Can you view yourself when you were a 6-year-old as not being who you are today? It is not too difficult. As a 6-year-old child who did not understand much, who was ignorant of many things and who made many mistakes.

Try now to raise some Compassion for that little 6-year-old who you were.

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What about when you were 10 years old? Can you raise some Compassion for that person who you were then, who did not understand much, who was ignorant of many things and who made many mistakes?

Try to raise some Compassion for that little 10-year-old.

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What about when you were 15 years old? Certainly not the same person as you are now. Probably did not really understand much, probably were ignorant of many things and probably made many mistakes.

Try to raise some Compassion for that 15-year-old.

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What about the person who you were last year? Can you view that person as different from yourself now? Probably not really understanding everything, ignorant of some things and still making mistakes.

That person needed Compassion also.

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What about the person who you were yesterday? Different in some small way from who you are today. Yesterday you probably did not understand everything, probably still ignorant of some things and possibly still making mistakes.

Try to have some Compassion for the person who you were yesterday, different in some way from who you are now.

\*\*\*\*\*

What about now? At this very moment, you probably do not understand everything, you are probably ignorant of some things, and you are possibly still likely to make a mistake. You need Compassion as much as everyone else. You have pains like everyone else. You have your own difficulties.

Try to have some Compassion for yourself.

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Now, what is the most important thing that you want? What can you wish for yourself that would be most valuable? Is it not that you will have Peace of Mind? That you will have the opportunity to learn,

practice and perfect Mental Development, so that you can overcome all of your difficulties, from the small to the large.

Give yourself that wish. Try to turn that kind of Lovingkindness toward yourself. You deserve this Lovingkindness just like everyone else.

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May I be able to continue my learning, practicing and developing of methods, techniques, and tools of mental development, so that I can cope with, understand, accept and overcome the difficulties and challenges of life.

May I find peace of mind.

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(end of meditation)

There are many different ways of doing Compassion/Lovingkindness types of meditation. This is one of them.

You may have noticed that certain phrases were repeatedly used. If you wish to do this type of meditation or other similar structured types of meditation that deal with Compassion/Lovingkindness, then it is often advised and can be very beneficial to use certain repeated phrases.

If you recall to mind the example used earlier about the mature parent and the sleeping child; it is possible that the parent may or may not actually have words going through the mind for the feelings of Compassion and Lovingkindness to arise. But for many of us who wish to develop more Compassion and Lovingkindness within ourselves, the use of words, reflections, visualizations and more can be valuable help.

However, it is important not to just simply perform the action of repetitious thought. Try to utilize these techniques to develop that deeper Compassionate, Lovingkind Understanding that all of us have difficulties, obstacles and challenges in life. All of us are liable to get sick, to get injured. If we live long enough, we will grow old and weak. And all of us will die. Just as you wish to avoid difficulties and obtain happiness, so, too, do most beings wish to avoid difficulties and obtain happiness.

When you practice Compassion/Lovingkindness meditation in the future, you will probably want to consider other relatives, friends, teachers, people you like, people you do not like, people you know, people you do not know. Maybe animals and other creatures. Perhaps especially those who annoy you and bring about the hindrance of anger and aversion in you; barking dogs, biting ants, mosquitoes.

Here are a couple of other ways of doing this type of meditation in a more systematic manner:

You could start with yourself, then your parents or substitute parents, then closest other relatives; husband, wife, children, brothers, sisters, expanding to the rest of your relatives, then friends, teachers, and depending on time, you could continue expanding to other people and creatures. When you finish, it can be helpful to come back to yourself.

A second method could be to start with yourself, then consider the person closest to you in the hall, then all others in the hall, then all others at this retreat. Expanding again to all on the island, all in Thailand, and so on. Again, when you finish, it can be helpful to come back to yourself. There are many other ways.

We wish to encourage you now to use the Compassion/Lovingkindness Meditation regularly in your practice, especially the standing and sitting. Sometimes do the breathing awareness for the period, and other times do Compassion/Lovingkindness for the period. Some meditators also like to begin every period with some Compassion/Lovingkindness meditation even if their main time is planned to be on the breath or other subjects. Others will end every sit with a few minutes. And there are some who will begin and end every sit that they do with some Compassion/Lovingkindness meditation.

This is also a technique which can help if you are trying to watch your breathing and a strong hindrance or wandering thought keeps coming back again and again, even if you are trying to just note them and return to the breath. If you find this is happening then you can change your object of meditation; let go of trying to watch your breathing and change into Compassion/Lovingkindness meditation concerning the different thoughts that are coming about so strong.

Perhaps doing some Compassion/Lovingkindness toward the people who are involved in the thoughts. Or to yourself because you have this particular problem at this time. You could then expand and consider the other meditators who have similar problems. Expanding again, you could consider other people, with similar problems who do not even know of any method to help themselves with these types of problems.

As you have changed your object of meditation into Compassion/Lovingkindness you may find that after some period of time, the thoughts and emotions which were giving you a lot of difficulty in the beginning have somehow gone away or faded. And that you are now a bit more relaxed toward them. If you find this happening you may then return to the breathing or, if you wish, continue with Compassion/Lovingkindness.

We would also like to encourage you to use this type of meditation when you are lying down, going to sleep. It has been written in many meditation books and has been the experience of many meditators that if a person develops Compassion and Lovingkindness strongly enough within themselves then certain benefits will come to that person. Among these benefits is the ability to fall asleep easily, wake up easily, and dream few, if any, unpleasant dreams.

Please keep in mind ... I am not saying that you can go to bed tonight, do this type of meditation and not have any unpleasant dreams ... what I said was "that if a person develops Compassion and Lovingkindness strongly enough within themselves then certain benefits will come to that person." As people change their life style, often they will find that the more peaceful they are in the daytime, the more peaceful will be their sleep and dreams.

Regarding sleeping and dreams: Many people who experience a nightmare or any type of agitating, disturbing dream often find that this affects their mental state for hours after they wake up, and sometimes even for a whole day or more.

If you have any disturbing dream, we recommend that as soon as you wake up, you do this type of meditation toward all of the different people and/or other beings who were in your dream, even if you do not know their names and only vaguely remember their faces.

As well, do some Compassion/Lovingkindness meditation toward yourself at that time. Then do some Compassion/Lovingkindness meditation to all the other people around the world who may be experiencing a nightmare or disturbing dream right at that moment. You may find that this helps you to lessen or let go of some of the anxiety or agitation that is present.

This type of meditation is also a technique which does not have to be done in only a "formal" meditation environment. In simple words, this is just a type of thinking. You can use this at any moment of the day. Any time that you are getting annoyed at someone else, you can reflect similar to how we reflected on our difficult people. Any time that you are getting annoyed at yourself, you can reflect on the segment about yourself. It is probable, too, that you can add more similar thoughts to the ones that I have given here tonight.

If you start to become more aware of the aversions in your life, from the slightest irritations to the most intense anger, and if you try to use reflections similar to those given here, then these reflections can help to remove these aversions. They can all fade away with the use of Compassion and Lovingkindness.

Anger and aversion normally disturb our Peace and Happiness, and disturb the Peace and Happiness of others. Compassion and Lovingkindness normally help to develop our Peace and Happiness, and help to develop the Peace and Happiness of others. The energy of anger and aversion may be strong, but we can bend this unwise energy into the wise energy of Compassion and Lovingkindness.

May each of us grow in Compassion and Lovingkindness.