

Homework for Week III
April 27-May 3, 2011
Witness: The Power in Awareness
Sally Kempton

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Dear Ones,

Again, it's been a privilege joining with you all in these practices. I'd like to encourage you to continue sharing your experience, questions, and insights with me and everyone on the listserve, or with me, privately, if you prefer.

Daily Practice

This week, please continue your daily meditation practice as last week. Don't forget to include some self-inquiry practice. If it feels too conceptual as a verbal question, see if you can turn it into an *intention* to tune into that which is there when there are no thoughts, no ideas, no emotions.

Or, instead, ask yourself **"What is prior to this thought? To this feeling?"** Then, tune into what arises, into the 'field' of the mind, the sensation of peace, or vibration, or emptiness that shows up when you ask that question. Remember, the question doesn't have to be verbal. It can be simply an intention to turn to the state prior to conceptual thought.

Remember, you can practice these self-inquiries as a part of your meditation practice, or at other times during the day. You can turn to it when you need it. What arises in answer to the question will shift and deepen as you practice.

Sending and Taking Practice

Finally, spend at least 3 of your daily meditation sessions doing the Sending and Taking Practice we did in our last class.

This practice Here's the practice we did tonight, which you can do either as a practice on its own, or as a further step in the sequence we've been practicing – ie, centering yourself in the heart, shifting your awareness backward until you sense an open spaciousness behind the heart.

When you're ready, begin to breathe in any thoughts, physical sensations

etcetera, through the heart, and into the spaciousness behind the heart. Then, on

the exhalation, breathe that sky-like spaciousness back through the heart into your body and your thoughts, and back out into the room. Have the sense that in this way you are breathing blessings from the Great Heart into your own body.

Experiment with this practice. You can do this with emotions as well, including painful or negative feelings. Feel the feelings, then breathe in the feelings, letting them dissolve into the sky behind the heart, then breathing that spaciousness and blessing back through the heart and into your emotional feelings.

(As you do, try it and notice how this practice does actually bring a sense of openness and space into feelings like anger or sadness!)

You can practice in this same way with another person in your life. Bring to mind someone you love, and practice breathing your sense of that person in through the heart, then breathing spaciousness and blessings into that person through the heart – always remembering to let the spaciousness come from the Great Heart.

Practice with someone you know who is in pain, grief or upheaval – breathing the sense of their pain in through the heart, letting it dissolve in the spaciousness of the Great Heart, then breathing out that spaciousness through your heart into that person, feeling that the Great Heart blesses and dissolves their pain.

Finally, you can bring to mind a situation in your world where there is pain, confusion, anger, grief, conflict. Breathe the energy of that situation in THROUGH your heart and into the Great Heart behind. Then breathe out the spaciousness and blessing of the Great Heart through your heart center and into that situation. Do this for at least five minutes.

This practice does transmit blessings to yourself and to others. It also, if you do it over time, will increase your awareness of the spacious energy of the Great Heart, the energy of that which is beyond thoughts, memories, emotions, yet which is filled with the compassionate energy of the Great Heart. And it will, little by little, dissolve the sense of separateness that keeps you isolated, limited, an holding back from your life.

Experimenting with Inner/Outer Awareness

Finally, do experiment with keeping simultaneous inward/outward awareness—a part of your attention in the witness, or in the heart, while you speak to people or walk or perform physical actions. Notice the effect of this type of inward/outward attention. How do you feel when you do it? How do you interact with others? Is there more sense of your own center? More sense of connection? More inner clarity?

Again, do feel free to write with comments, questions etcetera. The evaluation form will come as a separate email.

Much love,
Sally

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