

Exchanging Self and Others

MEDITATION OUTLINE

I. Examine how we are all equal

1. Isn't it true that everyone wants happiness and no one wants suffering?
2. When faced with two choices see how people always choose what they believe will make them feel happier.
3. Examine your tendency of mind. Over the last week or two, did you spend more time worrying about your problems and challenges or worrying about someone else's?

II. Test emotionally how it feels to worry about yourself

1. Think about bad things people have done to you, or haven't done for you. Or maybe you tend to worry about your future or that you're not good enough.
2. Notice a crunching at your heart. It feels bad to focus on yourself.

III. Make lists of good things you have done for others

1. Think of things you've helped other people with. Things you've done that made their life easier.
2. Notice there's an opening at your heart center when you think about helping others.
3. From what you've experienced in meditation, decide to change your habit of mind.

IV. Make the exchange

1. Think about the people you will encounter in your day. Stand in their shoes. What is it that they want and need? What will make them happier?
2. On rays of light from your heart, give them whatever will make them happy. Go as small or big as you like.
3. Once again, notice which feels better and more expansive: Worrying about yourself or thinking about others?

V. Dedication

1. To close, choose a few things that you can follow through on, off the cushion to make other people happier.
2. Dedicate the goodness of what you've done in this meditation to developing a habit of mind that thinks about others first, which is the true causes for happiness.