

Aversion and ill will - October 28, 2014
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Welcome to this 4th night of our practice period, this chance to - - perhaps --focus on our practice more often than usual, as well as a chance to practice within our community, sangha.

Our practice period is called Gladdening the Hearth: Freeing the Mind from the Hindrances. Review what we've done so far, focus on the hindrance of ill-will, sangha discussion.

Pali dictionary says they are obstacles that blind our mental vision. The hindrances have been called the weakeners of wisdom (and they can also be the impetus for wisdom)

First night intention and attitude (the gladdening of the heart, but the cultivating curiosity and spaciousness); second night how the hindrances fit into the Buddha's gradual training for freedom, last week the hindrance of sensual desire. In the coming weeks: sloth and torpor, restlessness and anxiety, uncertainty.

Margaret Atwood said that "the Eskimo has fifty-four names for snow because it is important to them; there ought to be as many for love." Perhaps you can think of 54 words for love?

I am sure we can think of 54 words for ill-will. *Range* of other words for ill will: annoyance ---rage////impatience, irritation, aversion, anger, resentment, indignation, spite, ire, denial, fear, anxiety.....you get the flavor. And the flavor is "I don't like this, I don't like the way things are" And the subtext is probably "and I'm going to change this."

Why are we spending time on the hindrances, this particular version of mental phenomena.

*Because they are **common visitors**, visitors that cloud our mind, visitors who are often unwelcome. Engaging with these visitors and working with our attitude towards these visitors is a major part of practice, both on and off the cushion.

Common: frequent, impersonal (they're not just yours, they're all of ours). They may be sparked by what we perceive as a personal affront or assault or rudeness or threat or whatever, but they're not specific to any of us. Rob Burbea: Remember...they are manifestations of our humanity. They are not

personal problems.....Taking them personally only increases our suffering. The view “self progressing on the path - or failing on the path - feeds the hindrances. AND they won’t disappear until we are fully awake.”

Visitors: many qualities of visitors -can arrive unexpectedly, can be unwelcome, they can feel like an invasion, an intrusion - and at some point, like visitors, they will leave. Only to appear again

Engaging with these visitors and working with our attitude towards these visitors is a major part of practice, both on and off the cushion. I think that we often think of the hindrances as something that we have to deal with so we can get on with “real practice.” Instead, I think the hindrances ARE the practice. Eugene Cash: If it’s in the way it is the way

Rob Burbea has said “hindrances are responses that are worthy of extra attention. Not obstacles but golden opportunities. Can we bring wisdom to these mental responses? Can they bring wisdom to us?”

What do these hindrances, these mind states interfere with? How much of a problem is this? What harm do they do?

This is going to be more interesting if you can investigate an instance of your ill-will. Please take a moment to recall a time in the last few days when you felt impatient, annoyed, irritated...an mild form of ill-will.

Rick rinses out his bowl each morning and places it on the counter. Right above the dishwasher. NOT in the dishwasher. 20 years..19 years of irritation

1. Hindrances take us out of the present moment. The stories we generate as a reaction to the hindrance leads to pre-occupation - your mind is “occupied”, not with the present but perhaps with our history around this situation or with our planning about what to DO about this. Is that true in your example?

2. Our mind -states color our perceptions, our view of the situation, our analysis of the situation. AND then our perceptions affect our actions. So if we feel irritated or resentful, we are more likely to act in a way congruent with irritation and resentment, which will often lead to actions we regret and/or actions that were not really warranted. Is that true in your example?

3. Hindrances can be a self fulfilling prophecy e.g I perceive someone as

annoying, AND I use a tone of voice or act the way an annoyed person would react, my chances of *producing* an annoyed person are pretty good Is that true in your example?

Buddha: Now imagine a bowl of water heated on a fire, boiling & bubbling over, such that a person with good eyesight would not be able to see his or her face reflected accurately in the water. In the same way, when one's awareness is possessed by ill will, overcome with ill will, and neither knows nor sees the escape, as it has come to be, from ill will once it has arisen, then one neither knows nor sees what is for one's own benefit, or for the benefit of others, or for the benefit of both...SN 46.55

Working with ill-will:

1. Pause. Take a deep breath. Do not speak; Identify what you are feeling as a kind of ill will (if you can)

“When ill-will is present within, one knows, ‘Ill-will is present within me.’
(When no ill-will is present within, one knows, ‘No ill-will is present within me.’

One knows how ill-will that has not yet arisen, comes to arise.

One knows how ill-will, once it has arisen, can be abandoned.

One knows how an abandoned ill-will does not arise in the future.)

2. Notice whether you are aware of the past, present or future. Or all 3.

3. Come out of your head and into your body. What is the effect in THIS moment? On you.

Do NOT focus on *them*. You might notice the pull to *not* do that, in other words, to focus on fixing them. How fascinating. Often, we can't really do anything about it or them, but we can be with ourselves. Where in the body do you experience ill-will/what does it feel like?

4. Consider how often you feel this ill-will? Is this feeling useful? Helpful? How well is this working for you?

How many years had I been getting irritated at a cereal bowl without feeling any better? Enough already! There must be another approach. (AND the approach is NOT problem solving. Many times irritation is waiting to land. And problem solving this won't prevent that. So use work with the arisen ill-will.

5. Cultivate spaciousness. Going back to your example...can you remember what your body felt like? Spaciousness is an antidote to constriction, to clinging, to grasping, to an unwillingness to let go. Can we cultivate “teflon mind” when ill-will arises...it comes up, then slides off. Or do we have velcro mind...and velcro for ill-will, unfriendliness, constriction???? Can we create more space, can we allow? Can we bring mindfulness to the hindrance - can we be *present but not caught*?

6. Cultivate metta, a quality of unconditional standing by, befriending. Almost anyone can be comfortable with comfort. One of the great gifts of this practice is that you can be comfortable with uncomfortable mental states:) CFeldman: Are we willing to tolerate some discomfort to achieve a life without discomfort?

Buddha:“I know of nothing other than the liberation of heart by loving-kindness that prevents the arising of unarisen ill-will and that abandons arisen ill-will. This is because when someone attends properly to a distasteful thing, unarisen ill-will does not arise and arisen ill-will is abandoned.” The Numerical Discourses I, ii.1-10

7. Cultivate friendships with people of good will.

Know this: **When one sees the five hindrances are *abandoned in oneself*, gladness is born and from gladness in his mind, one’s body becomes tranquil. (long discourses 1.75)
Abandoned, not suppressed.

