

# Making Peace With Feeling

- Thaniyo Thero

By making peace with what is felt, one is developing *metta* or non-ill will. By that I mean, no longer interfering with what is felt, by no longer trying to change it, but by withstanding it, by not craving it, by fully comprehending it.

When you feel pleasure, your default mode is to try and keep it, you want it to stay, you try to increase it because it does not feel adequate, there is something about it that just isn't satisfying you, yet it is 'pleasure', it is already enough of what it is in itself. In other words, pleasure is not good enough for you, you crave for it to be more, to last longer, and so on.

Your delighting in pleasure will not make you content, because it's an agitated attempt to keep pleasure, it's a holding on to something which is not yours and impossible to make your own. Such an act is not only lustful but also aversive and ignorant, an act of wanting things to be the way you want them to be and not the way they are.

When you feel pain, your default mode is to try to get rid of it, to decrease it. Yet it is the way it is and your attempt to change it is again not peaceful, it's not kind, not compassionate, not content, not equanimous. You don't want pain so you seek pleasure but when you get it, still you are not satisfied. After all, it can never be yours. Your gratuitous attitude of craving can never be satisfied no matter what you put in front of it. Its nature is to be unfulfilled.

You want the pain to change and you want pleasure not to change. You want *anicca* and you don't want *anicca*. Wanting *anicca* is wanting *dukkha*. This wanting or interfering with feeling which changes is maintaining your liability to be affected by feeling, which means you will never be peaceful, your mind will be dragged around with feeling in whichever way it goes. This wanting and touching feeling means that you will always be affected by it. In other words, you love when it's pleasant and hate when it's unpleasant. You are on and will continue to be on an emotional rollercoaster because you take feelings personally, you are holding them.

By detaching from a feeling through understanding its nature, and by no longer touching it with your attitude of wanting/craving, by way of not acting out of intentions based on greed, hate, or delusion, the feeling will not affect you anymore, you will be unable to love and therefore unable to hate. Your mental state will be brought to equilibrium, peace, and *upekkha*.

The reason I am emphasizing having the attitude of *metta* towards what is felt is because it's a refined act of non-craving, which if sustained, will eventually result in there being no possibility of hating anyone, because the only reason you find another person or situation irritating to the point of hatred, is because you hate the pain that has arisen and you long for the pleasure that is forever out of your control.

## Love or non-hate.

The problem that you can encounter if you think the *metta* practice taught in the suttas by the Buddha, is the practice of love, is that you will continue to delight in pleasure dependent on the

senses, which means you will also hate or be irritated when there is not enough of it. The degree to which you love is the degree to which you can hate.

*Metta* is not about love but non-hate. It's a quality that a great friend has. They can never hate you because they cannot love you. They are not emotionally dependent on feelings, their minds are undisturbed, peaceful, and therefore can be of great benefit to another who is clouded by love and hate or affected by feelings. No matter what you do, they see clearly when you do not. Their benevolence, their *metta* is "unconditioned".

*Metta* when fully developed becomes *upekkha*, complete peaceful detachment, and that cannot come about when you are doing something which is not peaceful, like fighting or even delighting in pleasure desperately holding on to it so that it doesn't change. That is not the path of peace or renunciation.

Renunciation of pleasure means not interfering with it, renunciation of pain means not interfering with it. Renunciation means non-craving.

When there is pain practice *metta* towards that. When there is pleasure, practice *metta* towards that, not wanting it to stay or change, i.e. unconditional friendliness.

If you want to practice *metta* for the uprooting of the cause of suffering, then you must let go of the feeling, let it be what it is, patiently withstand it, without interfering, and then you will be in a good position to see its nature, which is *agitating*. All feeling agitates and by holding on to it, by touching it, you are agitated, sometimes a lot as with pain or only a little as with pleasure, either way, feeling is an agitation. You can then realize that there is no such thing as pleasure, there are only different degrees of pain, and all this time, what you thought was pleasure was just less pain, and due to that assumption you held on to it as yours, as yourself, and thus were affected by its agitated nature.

The more you let go of your craving regarding a feeling the less it will affect you and the more peaceful/*upekkha* you become. This means that no matter what happens in life, no matter how much pain is 'caused to you by another being', you will be peaceful, and you will not be able to get angry, hateful, or irritated. Your mind will be a *brahmavihara*/a heavenly place because you removed the cause of love and hate from it.

### ***Sutta Nipāta 1.8 Metta Sutta:***

*"This is what is to be done by those who are skilled in goodness, and who fully understand the path of peace.*

*"Karaṇīyamattakusalena, Yanta santam padam abhisamecca;*

*They are competent and honorable, possessing integrity, well-spoken, gentle, and not conceited;*

*Sakko ujū ca suhujū ca, Sūvaco cassa mudu anatimānī.*

*Contented and easy to support, unbusied, frugal in their ways,*

*Santussako ca subhara ca, Appakicco ca sallahukavutti;*

*With peaceful faculties, clever, not intrusive or greedy amongst families.*

*Santindriyo ca nipako ca, Appagabbho kulesvananugiddho.*

*Not doing the slightest thing that the wise would find fault with.*

*Na ca khuddamācare kiñci, Yena viññū pare upavadeyyum;*

*Happy and secure, May all beings be happy!*

*Sukhino va khemino hontu, Sabbasattā bhavantu sukhittā.*

*Whatever living creatures, moving or unmoving, without leaving any out, long or large, medium, short, unusually shaped, visible or invisible, living far or near, those born or to be born:*

*Ye keci pāṇabhūtatti, Tasā vā thāvarā vanavasesā; Dīghā vā ye va mahantā, Majjhimā rassakā añukathulā. Diṭṭhā vā ye va adiṭṭhā, Ye va dūre vasanti avidūre; Bhūtā va sambhavesi va,*

*May all beings be happy!*

*Sabbasattā bhavantu sukhittā.*

*Not acting against, nor despising anyone anywhere.*

*Na paro param nikubbetha, Nātimaññetha katthaci na kañci;*

*Even when irritated by the perception of resistance, not wishing suffering on anyone.*

*Byārosanā paṭighasañña, Nāññamaññassa dukkhamiccheyya.*

*Just as a mother would protect her only beneficial child,*

*Mātā yathā niyaṃ puttam āyusā ekaputtamanurakkhe;*

*Likewise, all beings should develop an unrestricted mind.*

*Evampi sabbabhūtesu, Mānasam bhāvaye aparimāṇam.*

*Metta/Benevolent towards the whole world, develop an unrestricted mind.*

*Mettaṇca sabbalokasmi, Mānasam bhāvaye aparimāṇam;*

*Above, below, all-around, unconfined, friendly, and without enemies.*

*Uddham adho ca tiriyaṇca, Asambādham averamasapattam.*

*Whether standing, walking, sitting, or lying down, not becoming weary,*

*Tiṭṭham caram nisinno va, Sayāno yāvatāssa vitamiddho;*

*Always remember this; for this, is the dwelling of the gods.*

*Etaṃ satim adhiṭṭheyya, Brahmametaṃ vihāramidhamāhu.*

*Attained to view, accomplished in insight and virtue,*

*Diṭṭhiṇca anupaggamma, Sīlavā dassanena sampanno;*

*Liberated by the destruction of sensual desire, they are never again conceived in a womb."*

*Kāmesu vinaya gedham, Na hi jātuggabbhaseyya punareti"ti.*