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### *Session 6*

***Being with Feelings Meditation***

*Use this practice of Being with Feelings for brief periods at first, perhaps choosing less difficult feelings to practice with, and then allowing yourself to be with more difficult feelings or for longer periods. Always end with a period of mindfulness of your breath.*

Coming now to settle into a wakeful and dignified posture. Allow your eyes to close and allow the sounds around you to come into your attention. Maybe you can hear sounds from outside the room, or from inside. There is no need to reach for the sounds, or to label them, just let the sounds arrive and be aware of them, and also be aware of the silence around the sounds. Stay with this for a little while as you settle into this meditation.

In this practice we are learning to stay with whatever feelings we find and to become familiar with how they change and pass in their own time. We are giving our feelings a space.

Now, bringing to mind something that is giving you difficulty, a worry, a feeling, a situation. When you start to feel an emotion, at the same time, start to focus on your breathing. As best as you can, as well as noticing the emotion, notice the sensations of breathing. The breath coming in, the breath going out.

Notice the sensations inside your body, especially in your chest and abdomen. See if you can hold in your attention your breath, and the feelings you are experiencing in your emotions and body. As best as you can, hold the feeling in your attention and get a sense of it. Describe that emotion to yourself, if you feel anger, say to yourself, a feeling of anger has arisen, if you feel sadness, acknowledge it, I have a feeling of sadness. Maybe you are feeling happiness, or peacefulness…

Describe to yourself whatever it is you are feeling. Notice the strength of the feeling. Describe the intensity to yourself. Notice if the emotion is growing or diminishing. If the emotion were a wave in the sea, would it be rising towards the crest or falling away? While you are doing this noticing, as best as you can, keep the focus on your breath in awareness at the same time as the emotion.

Notice if the feeling changes. Are other emotions weaving into to the first one. Is there any change in the feelings in your body, in your chest or stomach? As you did before, see if you can describe to yourself any new emotion that may be appearing. As best as you can, keep noticing what is happening to your emotions and to your bodily sensations, looking for words to describe whatever it is and how it is changing, in content, feeling or intensity.

If you become aware of a desire to block or push away an emotion, or find a sense of discomfort, tension or resistance, as best as you can take your awareness there and breathe into the feeling. As you breathe out from this feeling or sensation allow yourself to soften and open, saying to yourself on the out breath, ‘It’s ok, whatever it is it’s ok. Let me feel it.’

When an emotion pulls for your attention, be aware that this is a wave that passes, like many emotional waves you have experienced in your life. Feelings, like waves, come and go. Keep using your breath to steady yourself, to connect you to the stillness and smoothness that exists beneath the waves.

Notice what it is like to not react to your feelings, how it is to just let them be there. Being with your feelings, without taking action. If a judgement about the feeling comes into your attention, just notice it and let it go. As best as you can, simply allow the feeling to be as it is. Keep watching your feelings for a little while longer, all the while describing to yourself what you feel and noticing anything as it is changing.

And now, allow your attention to focus completely on the breath. Letting the feelings and sensations you have been watching leave your awareness. Bringing your attention to your breath as it enters your body on the in breath, and then leaves on the out breath. Perhaps also be aware of the transition between the in breath and the out breath, and between the out breath and the in breath.

Sitting here quietly with your breath until you are ready to approach the next moments of your day, as best as you can taking with you the sense of stillness and calmness that exists beneath the waves.