

Buddhist Psychology

with Jack Kornfield, PhD

Module 5: Forgiveness: The Key to Escaping the Chains of the Past

Part 4: Turning Forgiveness into a Way of Life

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Module 5, Part 4

Turning Forgiveness into a Way of Life

Dr. Kornfield: Again, this is a training and a practice that you can undertake or you can teach to others.

I invite you to work with it, to explore it, to use the words and images that work for you – and in all of these trainings and practices to be free to change the words and to change the images until you find the ones that speak most genuinely from your heart.

There are other inner trainings that complement this practice of forgiveness.

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A Training in Reconciliation and Loving Kindness

Dr. Kornfield: One of them is the training in reconciliation, in which one reflects, "May all mothers and sons be reconciled. May all mothers and daughters be reconciled. May all fathers and sons be reconciled. May all fathers and daughters be reconciled. May all brothers and sisters..." and you can extend this.

There's the beautiful practice of loving kindness, which is done in the same fashion as the compassion practice. It uses both phrases and images.

The invitation of loving kindness and the feelings that come with it extends to oneself and others: "May I be filled with loving kindness – may I be happy." Imagine wishing that for yourself! "May I be free – may I be well."

You can explore the phrases to find ones that work for you. "May I accept myself just as I am" – "May I love myself just as I am" – "May I sense my own worthiness and goodness" – "May I hold myself with the loving kindness of Mother Mary, or the Dalai Lama, or Jesus, or Kuan Yin" – "May I meet the experiences of my life with a loving awareness."

As you find the phrases that work for you and let them begin to grow in you, you can use them when you're

“You can wish well and give loving feelings and thoughts toward all people around.”

stuck in traffic, or when you're in a long security line at the airport or in the grocery store.

When your mind will just be spaced out or irritated, you can look around and quietly – without looking weird – you can wish well and give loving feelings and thoughts toward all those people around – that teenager there with the tattoos and piercings, or that old man over there with the cane....

Pretty soon you find yourself falling in love with everybody around you – and they don't even know it. It's beautiful.

If you're on the airplane with them, when the plane lands you could say goodbye to them because they've all become your best friend.

It took you five minutes to move from sitting in your seat and reading your magazine in your "self capsule" to wishing well all those you see around you – and then you fall in love with the world around you.

It becomes not just a training but a way of life.