

Immeasurable!



Metta – Lovingkindness

Karuna – Compassion

Mudita – Joy

Upekkha – Equanimity

Course Syllabus

- Oct. 5: Overview of the four "Immeasurable" qualities
- Oct. 12: Metta – Lovingkindness
- Oct. 26: Karuna – Compassion
- Nov. 2: Mudita – Joy
- Nov. 9: Upekkha – Equanimity

Each class includes discussion, followed by a half hour meditation.

The meditation includes live music and some guided suggestions.

Why Am I Here?

First thought, best thought -

What is my intention for this class?

Immeasurable

- unconditional, all-encompassing
- arising from non-duality
- non-conceptual realm
- surrender to the divine

Measurable

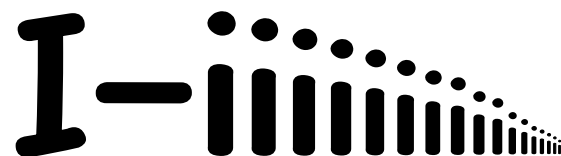
- conditional, mind can be divided
- arising from duality
- realm of name and form
- controlled by ego

Ego Survival Tactics

The ego believes that, to survive, it needs to maintain control - not dissolve into an immeasurable state. And so, it coaches us to divide and conquer.

First, we separate ourselves: "They are like *this*., but I am like *that*."

Then we define the other person's character/behavior in terms that we can react to in pre-programmed ways.



NOT!

Because it is so difficult to describe what the immeasurables ARE, it is helpful to know what they are NOT.

We can train ourselves to notice when we are being not-kind, not-compassionate, not-joyful, and not-equanimous.

In Buddhism, "not-immeasurable" states are depicted as spectrum of "enemies," from "near" to "far."

The "far enemies" tend to be obvious. The "near enemies," not so much.

Near and Far Enemies

The "far enemy" reaction tends to be overtly negative - e.g., ill-will.

The "near enemy" can masquerade as a reaction that might be construed in a positive way - e.g., attachment.

As we discussed last time, ill-will and attachment are far and near enemies of metta - lovingkindness.

A far enemy of karuna - compassion - is cruelty. Some near enemies are pity, sentimentality, and overdoing.

Karuna - Compassion

The root of Karuna is "kara," the Sanskrit word for "to act" or "to do."

This immeasurable requires action.

Action, however, doesn't mean leaping in and solving a problem. It can mean that. But more often, it's about just "being with" someone in their suffering, without judgment or projection.

करुणा

Not-Compassion

Pity can seem like compassion. But feeling sorry for someone first requires distancing oneself from them. It protects us from true fellow-feeling.

Sentimentality can seem like compassion. But it requires creating a story, and then relating to *that*, rather than to the actual being.

Overdoing can seem like compassion. But overdoing usually arises from a feeling of personal discomfort about another's pain, and is often misguided.

Journaling

Describe a time when you reacted to a situation with an enemy of Karuna.

Describe a time when you were able to engage in relationship from a standpoint of Karuna, by simply being present with someone in their pain.

Practicing Non-Duality

Last time, we journaled about moments in our lives when we experienced something so fully that there was no room for anything else.

These can be like the experience of an Immeasurable state.

Yogic and Buddhist practices are full of devices for helping us into one of these non-dual states.

One excellent one is *pranayama*, or breathing techniques.

Pranayama

In Sanskrit, "prana" means life force, and "ayama" means to draw out.

Pranayama – breathing techniques – can literally extend our lives. They help us access more oxygen, encourage the production of beneficial hormones, and release all kinds of stress.

One way to experience a quality like "immeasurability" is to suspend the breath between the inhale and the exhale. In that interval between breaths, the mind becomes quiet.

Sama Vritti Pranayama (Square Breath)

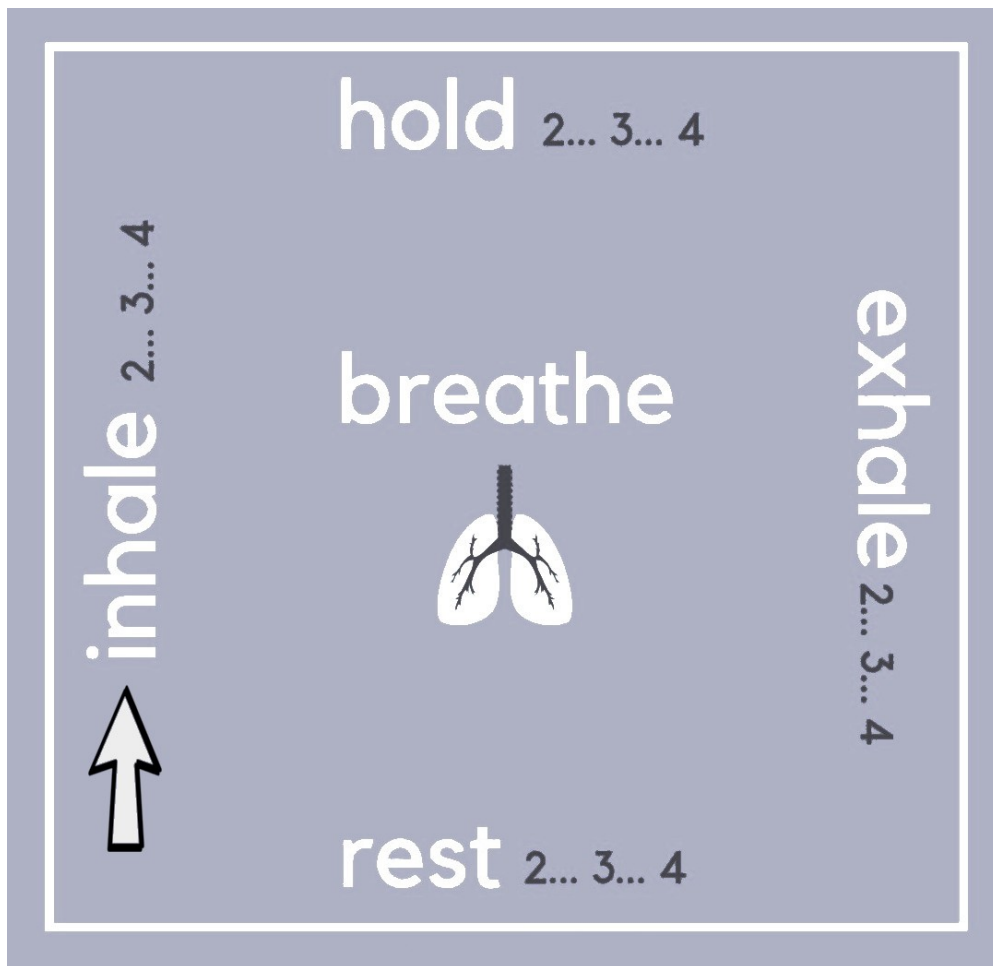
In Sanskrit, "sama" means equal.
"Vritti" means practice.

In Sama Vritti Pranayama, we slow the breath down to four equal parts. Between each inhale and exhale, there is an equal period of rest where the breath is suspended.

Breathe in for 4 counts, suspend for 4 counts, exhale for 4, rest for 4. Each breath is shaped by four equal sides.

Square Breath Practice

Don't force anything. If it's a strain to suspend the breath for four counts, just begin the exhale earlier. In time, the breathing will even out.



Counting Your Breath

Counting breath with numbers is a time-honored meditative practice. We learned to count as children; counting is comforting - predictable, objective.

When we "count" with a mantra, we add its frequency to our practice.



Mantras are often the names of celestial beings. "Avalokitesh-varaya," "Kanzeon," and "Kwan Seum Bosal" are some of these mantras.

What is a Bodhisattva?

"Bodhi" means full knowledge – enlightenment. "Sattva" means a being.

In Theravada Buddhism, it refers to Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha before he became THE Buddha.

In Mahayana Buddhism it also applies to one who vows to relieve suffering.

This can apply to ordinary people, as well as to "celestial bodhisattvas" – deity-like figures whose images can be seen in many temples and homes.

The Bodhisattva of
Compassion has
names in many lan-
guages:

Avalokiteshvara in
Sanskrit

Chenrezig in Tibetan

Guan Yin in Chinese

Kanzeon in Japanese

Kwan Seum Bosal in
Korean

This is a Water Moon
Avalokiteshvara
(Suwol Kwanum)
from 14th century
Korea.



Compassion Mantras

Many mantras are devoted to the Bodhisattva of Compassion. Here are a few:

Namov'alokiteshvaraya from Plum Village,

France:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IZkjX_c4hm4

Kwan Seum Bo Sal from Kwan Yin Chan Lin

Meditation Center, Singapore:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vaciUbi1NxM>

Chenrezig Chant from Karma Choeling

Monastery, New Zealand:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hjAaMtkIerY>

Meditation

Tonight's meditation will include some *Kwan Seum Bosal* chanting.

Kwan Seum Bosal means "Perceive World Sound" – "one who hears the cries of suffering in the world."

