

Cultivating a Friendly Mind 2.0

Unitarian Universalist Church of Concord NH

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Home Practice, Week Seven: Steeping the Heart in Joy and Delight (Mudita)

Mudita 2: Phrases and Categories—Mudita is Sympathetic or Appreciative Joy—Joy in the happiness and success of others. As we discussed last week, it can also be understood as Joy or Delight in the basic nature or “beingness” of another, or ourselves. Understood this way, Mudita can be a profoundly nourishing and encouraging quality to bring to our relationships, offering others the deep acceptance and affirmation that we all need to thrive. Though traditionally Mudita is not offered to oneself, in this view it is very much a quality that we would do well to shower on ourselves!

The **near enemy** of Mudita is being happy for others when their success benefits or reflects well on us, and the **far enemy** is envy or jealousy.

Phrases: (Choose one or perhaps two, or make up your own that expresses this view)

May your life be rich with joy and meaning.

May your happiness and good fortune continue/increase.

May you live with ease and contentment.

May you love your life/May you live with joy.

Categories of Beings: Offer your phrase/s, modifying as necessary depending on recipient.

Easy Person

Self

Friend or Family Member

Neutral person

Difficult person

All beings

Formal Practice: Practice daily with the recording, or feel free to guide yourself.

Begin by identifying someone who evokes this quality of delight for you, and who is doing well.

Sense their presence.

Clearly identify the mind state of Mudita—Delight and Sympathetic Joy. Begin to recite the phrase or phrases that help you to stay focused on this mind state, and to radiate it to this Easy Person.

Offer the phrase/s at a relaxed but consistent pace, using the repetition to keep your attention on the mind state of Mudita. Notice the feeling states that arise, without needing to create anything specific.

Move through the Categories as you have time. Notice what changes as the categories get less easy. Return to the Easy Person as often as you need, to clarify and reconnect with the mind state of Mudita.

Watch out for the temptation to get lost in the story—it can be tempting to enjoy the fantasies and the feelings. If you find yourself getting stuck in reactivity or numbness, just notice that and revisit the Easy Person.

Close by releasing phrases and resting in body/breath awareness or choiceless awareness.

Home Practice

Formal Practice:

Practice daily with the recording, or feel free to guide yourself. After spending a week focusing on this new Mudita 2 practice, spend the next two weeks reviewing the 6 practices you have now—the 2 Metta Practices, the 2 Compassion Practices, and now the 2 Mudita Practices. These are an integrated skill set and we want to be deeply familiar with all of them so that they will be readily available options of response as we move through the world.

Informal practices:

—**Mudita for Others:** As you move through your day, observe how much there is to celebrate in the lives of others—not only successes, but basic circumstances—good health, resources, relative peace, opportunity to explore, the support of community. Also attend to the simple beauty of nature. Attuning ourselves to what is beautiful offers the heart moments of rest and can help to balance the awareness of the difficulty and suffering that is present around us.

Particularly with close others, try seeing them through “Mudita glasses:” see the delightfulness of who they are, their uniqueness. Experiment with letting go of your opinions of how they might be improved by conforming a little more with your own values. Invest energy in supporting them in what is most meaningful to them, regardless of whether it is of interest to you. Think of a child bringing you a discovery—a broken piece of glass or a rock—and what a gift it is to share their enthusiasm for how wonderful it is!

Mudita for Self: Let yourself bathe in this even deeper expression of Metta for self—not just kindness, but actual delight for who you are, and support and encouragement for your exploration of what is meaningful to you. Feel how this is a source of energy and strength, and a protection against fear of failure—why not try something hard that you’ve always wanted to do, if you know that you’ll hold yourself with delight and encouragement even if your initial efforts don’t go so well?