

INFINITE FIELD OF BENEVOLENCE • OUR FOUR VAST INNER ABODES (HCO09)

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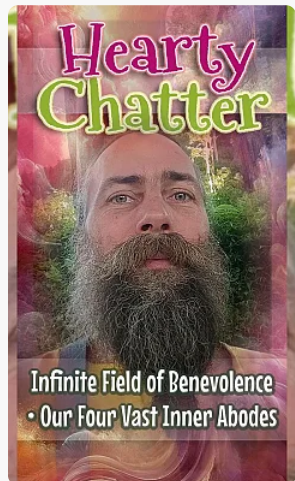
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Our quest for inner evolution is inseparable from empathy. When we find an empathic connection with all living beings – those we like, those we detest, and those we are neutral about – we abide in a vast field of benevolent awareness.

In today's episode, we look into the heart of the "four vast abodes" in the Buddha's teachings – Broad Goodwill (Metta), Compassion



(Karuna), Shared Delight (Mudita), and Equanimity (Upekkha) – a noble quartet of empathic dimensions.

*#HeartyChatter #FourVastAbodes #Empathy #Goodwill
#Compassion #SharedJoy #Equanimity*

May all beings be happy. A most noble intention. Rooted in compassion and kindness. Speaking of deeper, broader, more universal compassion and kindness, it's hard not to touch on the Buddhist teachings on the same. So we have this quartet of vast and noble abidings of awareness, worthy to be mused upon by the wise.

In the original Pali: Metta, Karuna, Mudita and Upekkha. Goodwill, compassion, delight and equanimity. Really there are no standard translations. None that would convey the gist of it. Such are the limits of language. They need not be the limits of our awareness.

Starting with **compassion, Karuna**, at its heart – sorrow for the sorrow of others. A negative empathic bridge of resonance, a feeling of sameness with the struggles of other sentient beings.

At the positive flip side, we have **delight**, really "co-delight", **Mudita** – joy for the joy of others. A positive emotional bridge of resonance, a feeling of sameness with the success and fulfillment of others.

Do we then feel sorrow for the sorrow of others and joy for the joy of others? If only we rise beyond our narrow subject shells, exit from the dog-eat-dog paradigm, where every sentient being is a contestant with the other. Then certainly yes, there will be joy and sorrow for the joys and sorrows of others.

Beyond that, we have **Metta** or Maitri, variously translated as **universal goodwill**, loving kindness, etc. The latter really slips into the hippie Jesus semantic field. I wish that weren't the mainstream expression. Maitra really literally means friendship, companionship or partnership. Its roots in the ancient coupling of Mitra and Varuna, the Yin and Yang of cosmic balance. Then, with this universal goodwill, we really are gazing from the broadest of perspectives. May all these living beings reach the best of their destinations in the fullness of their life-cycles.


Then, at the other side, we have **Upekkha** or **equanimity**. Let it be, it's not your problem. It's the

countermeasure for your tendency to be too meddlesome, involved in the affairs of others. You can't fix everything for everyone. You can't coerce them for doing what's best for them. As they plant with their intention, so they shall reap. Let them live and learn.

So that in short is the quartet of worthy inner abidings. Broad goodwill. Sorrowful empathy. Joyful empathy. Equanimity. If we can find these tunings for all living beings – those we like, those we hate, and those we are neutral about – in time we enter a most vast field of universal awareness.

If you lack a sense of empathy, your attempts at conscious cultivation amount to nothing at all. And why is that? Because a lack of empathy indicates you are fixated on the concerns of your narrow subject self. You are still the navel of the universe, other beings orbiting around you. You are not peers, friends, integrated in the fabric of the collective.

Then pretty please, wakey up. Rise beyond your selfish self-imposed limits. There you will find your heart of compassion and the infinite fields of benevolent abiding. Be well!

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