

Let's now look at the middle section of the metta sutta, as follows:

Wishing: In gladness and in safety,
May all beings be at ease.
Whatever living beings there may be;
Whether they are weak or strong, omitting none,
The great or the mighty, medium, short or small,
The seen and the unseen,
Those living near and far away,
Those born and to-be-born,
May all beings be at ease!

Let none deceive another,
Or despise any being in any state.
Let none through anger or ill-will
Wish harm upon another.
Even as a mother protects with her life
Her child, her only child,
So with a boundless heart
Should one cherish all living beings:
Radiating kindness over the entire world
Spreading upwards to the skies,
And downwards to the depths;
Outwards and unbounded,
Freed from hatred and ill-will.

This is basically describing maitri, or the completely open heart.

For myself, reading this, two reactions happen:

1) **The heart reaction:** a feeling of connection with everything, of being inspired, knowing that love is the only healing force in the world.

2) **The mind reaction:** which comes up with the barriers veiling the open heart. This looks a little different for each of us, but we all have it. My mind goes into cynicism, and says, "Well, what about Elon Musk?". For you it may be someone else, but that's just a matter of personal circumstance and conditioning.

The first part of the sutta, from which we took phrases last class to work with, is a relative teaching that takes place within our mundane psychological identification, or the skandas. The skandas, (also called the aggregates, or the heaps of clinging from the Buddhist tradition) are the parts that make up the ego-identified small mind, the false self we mistakenly believe to be who we are:

1. the body.
2. feelings of pleasant and unpleasant and how they push us,
3. perceptions, or the way the world is skewed through the lens of the small mind.
4. mental outflow and processes: judging, fixing, commentary, justification, intention, etc., and finally
5. consciousness, which is thinking awareness is a property of 'me', and shares the limits of the body/mind.

That first section is about what is skillful to cultivate within the body/mind/ consciousness/choices of behavior so that the energy within in the skandas will be more transparent; and doesn't block alignment with the template of the ever-perfect.

While the skandas are ultimately empty of a 'self', sila (ethical conduct), which are choices made within the skandas, is a necessary part of the path.

On a gross level, it's hard to move into the oneness of the heart space if you've just held up a gas station or are screaming at your co-workers. It's kind of like owning a car: you know the car is ultimately not 'me', but you take pains to repair, fuel, and maintain it so that it doesn't impair your ability to get around.

The second part, cannot be realized within the skandas themselves. It moves into our true identity, that cannot be embodied in the mind. It's a signpost that everything we are seeking will not, will never be found in the mind, or skandas.

So what do we do with the Elon Musk reaction? If we stay within the skandas, it's a never ending problem, as the mind covers truth with a more

or less opaque screen of judgments, opinions, reactions, conditionings, etc. Even if you decide (in the mind), I will NOT have this reaction, Elon is my new best friend, well, that's just another judgment. It's another self-help fix-it Band-Aid.

The only possible out is to move into the heart. What does this mean? It means dis-identifying with the mind, and becoming centered through the witness, the knower, finally back to the screen of awareness itself, and to 'know' you are experiencing the reaction.

Remember the beginning instructions: that which is aware of anger is not itself angry? Moving into the heart means fully present with the reaction itself. Full attention means no resistance, full acceptance. No resistance means there is nothing there for the contracted energy to feed upon, to keep powering it. When you are intensely present, thought ceases to arise.

As in class, we are who we are. fully human, things trigger us and we react. Not a problem in itself, we simply do not identify ourselves as the reaction. Perfection is not about controlling what happening in the body/mind: only having 'nice' thoughts and feelings. It's about uncovering the perfection in our Being which is already, and always has been there.

Here's Eckhart Tolle: (p.132, Power of Now)

"If there is anger, KNOW that there is anger.... whatever it is, KNOW the reality of that moment and hold the knowing....If you react at all to (someone's) unconsciousness, you become unconscious (identified with your mind) yourself. But if you remember to KNOW your reaction, then nothing is lost."

This is something you must directly experience. That's your mission. Have a wonderful spring.