

Deepening Joy

The Joy of Loving Others

September 2011

Centering Meditation

Allow yourself to arrive here, in this place, in this moment; setting aside for the moment the cares and concerns of the day. Settle into sitting here in the safety and peace of this sangha. Bring your attention inward to your own gentle breathing in and out. And let yourself settle into a sense of your own goodness, your own kindness, or gentleness, or sincere intentions to heal and awaken.

Dharma Talk: The Joy of Loving Others

There is an arc in Awakening Joy to the three chapters on Love- Chapter 7: Loving Ourselves, Chapter 8: Loving Others, Chapter 9: Compassion (service to the suffering of the world.) As though Chapters 1-6 were tools to prepare the mind and heart for the manifestations of love which James basically frames as opening the heart and letting the natural energy of love flow through, which leads to great joy.

Love a little; a little joy. Love a lot; lots of joy. Pure love; pure joy.

The title for chapter 8 in the book is the Joy of Loving Others. This month's title in the Awakening Joy course is Connection with Others. There certainly is joy in loving others, joy in connection, joy in opening the heart. All of them pointing to the big umbrella of Love. The "undercurrent of love that links everyone", as James quoted his assistant Kate experiencing.

So we could focus on:

1. still learning to love ourselves as loving many parts of ourselves we have split off, a lifelong practice.
2. loving others in recognition of inter-connectedness

Consider the following from the Dalai Lama: *"We humans are social beings. We come into the world as the result of others' actions. We survive here in dependence on others. Whether we like it or not, there is hardly a moment of our lives when we do not benefit from others' activities. For this reason it is hardly surprising that most of our happiness arises in the context of our relationships with others."*

Rick Hanson has been teaching "seeing the being in the body" lately, seeing the True Nature of another as a way of seeing the diving underneath all the roles and stereotypes and personalities, certainly a useful practice as we learn more about metta-loving kindness for the difficult person tonight.

3. love of god, communion with divine, as Sufis, Hindus, Christian mystics do.

4. loving others in intimate committed relationships, marriage and family. James and Jane – to wake each other up. Stephen and Ondrea Levine: Embracing the Beloved – relationship as spiritual path. Where relationship is catalyst and commitment is container for growth.

5. loving others in close friendships, close pets, loving others in chosen community (Buddha’s sangha, whole of holy life; Thich Nhat Hanh: the next Buddha will be a sangha), even chosen work; service together, more in chapter 9 on compassion.

All of these are about the flow of the energy of love, developing the capacity to love, beaming or radiating love as well as receiving it, taking it in, being nourished by it, regardless of the object of love.

James makes clear, as does all contemporary thinking about love. It’s not the “other” that causes love, or causes the pain of love. I like his idea that the confusion that the “other” causes love or takes it away IS what causes the pain. Love itself is not painful, just as awareness itself is not afraid or angry.

But love is a mysterious force, a living presence within; it flows through us. We are part of something greater than ourselves. There are leanings here toward James’ training with Hindu masters as well as Buddhist ones. And I love the poem by the Sufi poet Hafiz: “The sun never says to the earth “you owe me.” Look what happens with a love like that. It lights the whole world.” Sri Nisargadatta says: Love tells me I am everything; wisdom tells me I am nothing. Between the two my life flows.

All of us have that capacity to let love flow through us to ourselves, to others, to the world, to the divine. Chapter 7, 8, 9 create the conditions to cultivate that capacity.

First half of book chapters 1-6 tools rested in mindfulness. Conscious intention to awaken joy, mindfulness itself, mindfulness of gratitude, mindfulness of larger perspectives to deal with suffering, that can hold and accept everything that would de-rail us from joy, mindfulness of integrity and truth that is a primary, reliable gateway to joy, mindfulness of letting go, meaning letting go of anything that is not our true and joyful Buddha nature so that we can find joy even in the midst of suffering. Those chapters are a solid platform for joy.

Chapters 7-9 rest in the Brahma Viharas, loving kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, equanimity. The other wing of the dharma – two wings – wisdom and compassion – awareness and compassion, mindfulness and compassion – there are four Brahma Viharas, which means heavenly abodes or divine abodes – where we dwell when our minds are clear and our hearts are open. Chapter 1-6 clearing the mind; chapter 7-9 opening the heart.

These Brahma Viharas are taught both as an arrival state of mind – we naturally dwell in loving kindness, compassion, joy and equanimity when we mature and fulfill our spiritual

practice - and they are practices to create the conditions to get us there. Loving kindness – metta – is the generous well-wishing for the happiness and well-being of others (or for ourselves) that opens our own hearts. Compassion – karuna- is the opening of the heart and holding within the heart the suffering of others and ourselves, without being overwhelmed by the suffering. Joy – mudita –is the delight in other people’s happiness rather than envy or comparison; our joy in their joy keeps our heart open.

So the first three Brahma Viharas help us open our hearts and connect with others in skillful ways – very relational practices to heal the disconnection, sense of isolation or loneliness that blocks the flow of love, either receiving or giving. The fourth Brahma Vihara – equanimity – returns us to mindfulness, the calm, spacious awareness and acceptance of everything as it is, no grasping or clinging, no aversion or pushing away. Equanimity is the foundational support and container for the other three.

Loving kindness – metta – is the primary tool James teaches in Chapter 7 – Learning to Love Ourselves and in Chapter 8 - Learning to Love Others. And even here James hearkens back to mindfulness to train mind and heart to see clearly and stay open even in the face of pain and suffering. I like a quote from Theodore Rubin that’s relevant here: *Kindness is more important than wisdom, and the recognition of that is the beginning of wisdom.*

We’ll do some exercises after the break in the Brahma Viharas, especially metta and mudita.

First, let’s look at the pain and suffering when love is not flowing so we can understand better what it takes to get it flowing again. James, and everyone mostly, characterizes this pain and suffering as the contraction when connection has been broken or is not perceived. When we contract from pain, hurt, fear, threat, into separation, isolation, disconnection, from the goodness in ourselves and from the resonance of goodness with others. So re-connecting with our own goodness (true nature or true self) and re-connecting with the goodness of others is going to be essential to feel connected and inter-connected again. There are some sound psychobiological reasons why lack of connection, lack of love, brings distress and emotional pain and suffering.

James cites Abraham Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, that after survival and biological needs are met – the need to belong is our highest priority. Actually, developmental psychologists that research attachment now know that the need to connect and belong is the fundamental biological priority – our desire to attach is biologically hardwired; it is the drive that ensures our survival and precedes all other drives. (The need to belong and connect is one of 7 basic motivational drives hardwired in; don’t have to be taught; though sometimes do have to re-learn how to connect if that didn’t go so well the first time around, and statistically for half of us, it didn’t.)

I’ve taught a lot about how the experiences we have in our earliest relationships shape or condition our attachment styles- our styles of connecting and loving – lifelong. I do have to disagree with James on p.212 - and he knows I disagree – about attachment is what

you do as a baby but not as an adult. Uh uh. Our need for secure attachment as a foundation for psychobiological well-being is lifelong – secure attachment is a great gateway to resilience, equanimity and joy. All the qualities of love James described on p. 207, to be known by another, to feel understood, accepted, relaxed, connected, cared for and to care, to delight in and be delighted by, are researchers' descriptions of secure attachment. And secure attachment – a reliable experience of safety and trust – is the foundation of healthy mature adult relationships – where there is connection and differentiation, reliability and loyalty and autonomy (as he described with himself and [son] Adam) where there is loving and freedom (Tagore – let my love like sunlight surround you yet give your illumined freedom) and there's a lot of equanimity in secure attachment – we can care a great deal, we're not indifferent, but we can accept and let go, not take good or bad, personally. So secure attachment – or earned secure attachment at the psychological level of the adult is an excellent container and companion for relationships as a spiritual path, the waking up and ... fulfillment James talked about with him and [wife]Jane.

There's lots of good work to do in healing the less than secure attachment that statistically almost half of us experienced growing up. Therapy and loving kindness practice can both be very helpful. James mentioned several blocks we experience as adults that make metta – any of the Brahma Vihara's- a challenging practice. That keep us disconnected from our own goodness or the goodness of others.

Here's my list of what disconnects?

1. besides our own reactivity and defensiveness from not loving ourselves which we worked on in previous chapter.
2. filters – not seeing other person or dynamics between us clearly.
3. agendas – expectations, rules, control rather than allowing organic unfolding
 - a. not just personal agendas but archetypal agendas – what marriage is supposed to be or sex is supposed to be
 - b. unconscious agendas as Phyllis in the book had: if I do this for you, you will love me back (those unconscious attachment rules) (2-Enneagram)
4. using another person for our own needs
 - a. as a therapist I very often see couples whose marriages are really money mergers rather than a path to spiritual awakening – and of course Elizabeth Gilbert's research for her book *Committed* found this has been so for most cultures in most of human history.
 - b. using other people to fill the hole in the heart, to be the nightlight in the middle of the night rather than a mutual exchange of that safety net and refuge. I love James' phrase: others are not satellites to our world. (Narcissism =others orbit around us)
5. or allowing other people to use us for their needs, either consciously colluding because that's the unconscious contract of the relationship or submitting because we don't have

the power or don't believe we do or at some time in our lives really didn't have the power or the skill or the awareness or the safety to stop the abuse or the betrayal.

6. prioritizing rules or being right over relating. People are screwed up and behaviors are abusive. We need good boundaries which we'll talk about under what works, and we need forgiveness, not of people's actions but of the confusion that led to those actions or of ourselves for the limitations of the tools we had to protect ourselves at the time.

What Connection Is

1. Presence

A "moment of meeting" is a moment when two people traverse a feeling-landscape together as it unfolds in real time. They achieve a "felt sense" of each other; they share a sufficiently similar mental landscape so that a recognition of specific fittedness is achieved – they each know what the other is experiencing.

The authentic, mutual responses of this shared feeling voyage create a shared private world that re-organizes the relationship and [initiates] an irreversible shift into a new state. The two people sense an opening up. There is a newly expanded intersubjective field that allows for different possibilities of ways-of-being-with-one-another.

These shared feeling voyages are so simple and natural, yet very hard to explain or even talk about (outside of poetry). Moments of meeting are one of life's most startling yet normal events, capable of altering our world step by step or in one leap. People are changed, and they are linked differently for having changed one another.

- Daniel Stern, The Present Moment

2. Openness – curiosity – honoring – open to seeing, embracing what is there,
 - a. focus on them or on dynamic rather than self-absorption (if we still have less than secure attachment likely to be absorbed in our own anxiety or defenses or projections.
 - b. let others be themselves, be at ease with themselves.

People will forget what you said; people will forget what you did; but people will never forget how you made them feel. – Maya Angelou

- c. appreciate others as unique expression of life (big spiritual path!)

3. engagement – a dance back and forth

4. resonance – shared feeling of ease (from genuine presence, openness, engagement collaboration and co-creation that leads to safety and trust.)

Safety and trust is foundation of everything else, is what leads to everything else.

Safety and trust leads to ease, well-being, joy

Safety and trust leads to play, creativity, exploration, sharing – what James mentioned made him so happy in the love he shared with Jane.

Safety and trust leads to understanding, compassion forgiveness

Safety and trust leads to good boundaries

p. 218 course participant : *“When my husband is angry and in a bad mood, it is really helpful for me to recognize that he is confused and suffering, and that he doesn’t realize this is not the way to happiness. This completely changes my state of mind from blaming and criticism (and from becoming just as angry as he is) into compassion and acceptance. I have also found that I can just let him be mad and still be happy myself.”*

How do we get to safety and trust, which is how do we get to earned secure attachment? I’m going to suggest sometimes a wise, empathic skillful therapy can be an excellent precursor, a synergistic companion, to the metta practice James suggests in this chapter.

James doesn’t talk about therapy in this chapter though he quoted me in the previous chapter Q –LG. *“If you’ve never felt loved, the presence of an empathic other can serve to awaken the loving presence inside you.”* What I would say now is that very often we do have to recover a sense of being seen, valued, loved, to be able to see, value, and love ourselves so that we can see, value, and love others, truly, not for our own needs, but for a respectful and loving honoring of who they are, or who they and we are together, and very often working with a wise empathic skillful therapist is one of the most healing and transformative relationships we could ever have to cross that threshold, that watershed of spiritual practice – learning to love ourselves.

The roots of resilience are to be found in the felt sense of existing in the heart and mind of an attuned, empathic, self-possessed other. –Diana Fosha

We heal by being seen. – Jack Kornfield

Not only are many Spirit Rock teachers therapists – Jack, Sylvia, Eugene, Deborah, Howie, but they have been through their own therapy themselves, and the therapeutic relationship is often where this sense of safety and trust can be established firmly enough that it becomes a stable foundation for a successful metta practice.

That said,

We can turn to metta practice, loving kindness practice that James spends most of Chapter 8 leading us through. As he said, however closed or wounded our heart may be, it wants to open. And developing a kind and loving heart may be the most important thing we do in life if we want to be happy.

Metta, the practice of sending loving kindness to ourselves or to others as a way to open the heart, begins with re-connecting with our own goodness – our own noble qualities as a platform to perceive the goodness and noble qualities in others. Then, we are tapping into love as the mysterious force, the living presence, the undercurrent that links all of us in the Divine Love, or Big Love, as Patricia Ellsberg would say.

So metta isn't about small personal love for the small personal self. It's about the goodness in us meeting the goodness in others – our true nature sees and honors their true nature. And when that's strong enough, it doesn't even have to be reciprocal; we open our hearts and “fall in love”. (It's very sweet in a metta retreat to practice metta with your neutral person and at the end realize how fond you are of them, how attached in a good way, or someone comes up and tells you, you were their neutral person and you receive all the well-wishing for your own happiness coming toward you.)

*I honor the place within you where
The entire universe resides.*

*I honor the place within you of love and light,
Of peace and truth.*

*I honor the place within you where,
when you are in that place in you
and I am in that place in me,
there is only one of us.*

- Mahatma Gandhi

So there's a progression of loving kindness practice. First opening our hearts to ourselves which was Chapter 7 and is the practice of a lifetime. The watershed of spiritual practice. Then, we progress through the categories of wishing love and happiness and well-being to a benefactor – a person who has unconditionally loved us or been wisely helpful to us on our path [The first time I ever spontaneously dropped into a jhana state - the dissolving of self into a state of bliss and rapture was when I was doing metta practice for James as my benefactor. I was on a weekend with Steve Armstrong and Kamala Masters and they were teaching metta (loving kindness) as a gateway to the jhana states and it happened and Steve could validate it happened. I can't promise we'll drop into a jhana state from exercises we do after break on Brahma Viharas, but these practices are the path to supreme love.]

I digress. The point is to feel the love flowing through us; feel the opening of the heart in the body so we know when we contract again in pain that we have become disconnected from that flow. I like James' addition to the traditional metta phrases, may you be happy, may you be well, may you feel my love for you. Which is not just lobbing loving kindness over the wall at the object but feeling the connection.

From wishing well to a benefactor we send loving kindness to a dear friend and this is often not yet our partner or spouse or parent or child – those relationships can be complex, with the pain and hurt James mentioned. So we practice metta for someone we feel safe with and trusting of, so our hearts can open. Metta is a practice of opening our hearts, whatever the other person is doing or not doing. So we practice opening our hearts where it's easier, and then opening to more and more challenging people.

James: “The more I look for the good and beautiful in others, the more I see it, and this seems to draw the best out of them.” Like a universal law of physics, like gravity or $E=mc^2$.

We may practice metta for a benefactor or dear friend for days on retreat, or months in our home practice, before our heart is ready to move on naturally to a neutral person. There are so many neutral people to send loving kindness to! Anyone you don’t know well, a neighbor several houses down, someone sitting near you in a class, the clerk in the checkout line, someone sitting next to you on a bus or plane. Because we don’t know this person’s history, or have any history with them ourselves, our goodness meets their goodness, we can be a simple clear channel of loving kindness to them. It simply takes our intention and our concentration, our wise effort.

From neuroscience we know that anything we focus attention on will cause neurons in the brain to fire, repeated focused attention, repeated neural firings. When we are focusing our attention on someone’s noble qualities or goodness, when we are focusing our attention on our own well-wishing, our own heart opening, that nobility or goodness, that well-wishing and heart opening is what the brain registers. So the practice cultivates our experience and our memory of that experience making it easier and easier to remember and to do.

Heather Martin, student of James and guest dharma teacher who has taught many metta retreats at Spirit Rock, says it’s like getting a hoop rolling with a stick; once you have the momentum going you only have to stroke it once in a while, it just keeps rolling along.

Metta for the difficult person is the most challenging. This practice of metta is where the rubber meets the road; we’ve built up a head of steam with previous metta practices with people less difficult. We can now keep our heart open much of the time except when we’re triggered. We have to keep the metta flowing to keep our heart open and slip the difficult person into that stream of metta. See any of their good qualities (like the Dalai Lama would see them.) Or slip a difficult part of that person into the stream of metta. Or a difficult part of ourselves into that stream of metta. When sending metta to the difficult person becomes difficult, retreat back to metta for a benefactor, then dear friend, then neutral person, build up your momentum, and try again with the difficult person.

Longfellow Q p. 231 *“If we could read the secret history of our enemies, we should find in each man’s life sorrow and suffering enough to disarm all hostility.”*

Or like James, when metta for a difficult person goes to the more traditional metta category of the enemy who has been cruel, it may be necessary to wish them well-being as though that could be true. As though they could wake up to where their true happiness lies (in being loving themselves). We send metta as a prayer that they can wake up and wish to be loving and stop harming. Ultimately understanding, compassion forgiveness more powerful than hatred. King, Mandela, Gandhi knew this.

This practice is to keep your heart open and compassionate with a difficult person, regardless of what happens with them, and the power of succeeding in keeping our hearts open, even once, even to a part of them, is that we learn it is possible to keep our heart open with a difficult person. Then we are building faith, from experience, that we can do it again.

Merton Q again. *Then it was as if I suddenly saw the secret beauty of their hearts, the depths of their hearts where neither sin nor desire nor self-knowledge can reach, the core of their reality, the person that each one is in the eyes of the Divine. If only they could all see themselves as they really are. If only we could see each other that way all the time. There would be no more war, nor more hatred, no more cruelty, no more greed. ...I suppose the big problem would be that we would fall down and worship each other.*

This is where forgiveness practice can be very, very helpful. James also includes in this chapter an exercise on Forgiveness, because we do get shut down from the pain of love lost or love gone awry, from pain and disappointment and hurt and betrayal and abuse, and for all of us forgiveness practice is as essential as the loving kindness practice to come out of contraction and re-open our hearts to ourselves and others, to the suffering of the world.

I heard Fred Luskin speak a year ago last May with Jack Kornfield at a daylong at UC Berkeley sponsored by the Greater Good Science Center on Forgiveness, my write up of that daylong is in my May newsletter archived on website.

If the great de-railer of loving ourselves is shame in all its flavors – why I led us last month in the arc of allowing, being with, accepting, tolerating, embracing, integrating that is the watershed of spiritual practice and psychological healing, then de-railing of loving others is anger and hatred. Forgiveness practice is essential for both.

Then from learning to keep our hearts open to even our most difficult people, it becomes possible and natural to open the flow of love flowing through us to all beings everywhere, omitting none, where there is no more “other”.

Read metta sutta. [included below]

Since this flow of love is seen as what inter-connects us, then it is natural to want this flow to flow to all beings. James gives examples in the chapter of inter-connectedness: people of all ages, ethnic groups, nations, religious backgrounds, political beliefs. Metta for all beings is simply Love loving itself through you. When we dwell in a field of love – big love When we become an instrument of love, joy grows.

We begin to see that the heart has no limits. Like awareness has no limits. Loving kindness is the heart’s natural support for compassion, to care about the suffering of all beings (Chapter 9) and for mudita – joy in the good fortune and well-being of all beings. There is a natural uplift when others thrive. When our mind is focused on their

happiness, our consciousness expands. When our mind contracts in comparison, envy, disappointment, our energy becomes negative and we become unhappy.

James even mentions reverse mudita, the exercise we did last month of receiving everyone's joy for us for what we want to be appreciated for.

And then there's play – connecting through laughter and play. We're hardwired to connect through play, one of the seven basic motivational drives. Shared play and exploration of the world develops the brain so we can be open, curious, and learn. As James says, "Sometimes just changing your face and body language can create more space in your mind. Laughter is a real aid to bring about that spaciousness." It's all true.

Experiential Exercise #1: to Practice Loving One's Self

Sit quietly, comfortably. Breathe gently into your belly, slowly in and out. Breathe a sense of goodness into your belly. Breathe into your belly as though you were safe.

Now remember people or things in your life you are grateful for. Savor the gratefulness throughout your body. Remember moments of kindness in your life, when people have been kind to you, then when you have been kind to others. Savor the feeling of kindness throughout your body. Remember a moment of feeling loved and cherished by someone, then remember a moment of you loving and cherishing someone, even a beloved pet. Savor the feeling of love throughout your body. Let yourself claim the goodness of your own self now.

From this place, identify several of your own noble qualities, qualities of yourself that reflect your own True Nature, and then send yourself wishes for your own happiness and well-being from there. May I feel peace and contentment in my heart. May I feel love and joy in my being. May I feel wisdom and clarity and openness in my mind. May I rest in deep ease and happiness.

Experiential Exercise #2: to Celebrate Joy.

Spend a minute or two sharing with your partner something that brings you joy and share all the reasons why it brings you joy. As you listen to your partner, take in their joy and send them your wishes that their joy continue, their joy increase. Notice what happens in your own body as you share your joy, as you listen to another's joy, as you send them mudita, the wishes that their joy continue.

Experiential Exercise#3: the Brahma Viharas

From class, James credited Joanna Macy; I've done this with Jack Kornfield, practicing the Brahma Viharas in dyads. Turn to a partner, and in silence, simply perceive the noble qualities of this person, and wish them happiness, ease, contentment, peace. Know that they are sending you wishes for your own happiness at the same time. Now imagine the trials and troubles this person might have experienced in their lifetime, the losses and

suffering and grief they might have experienced in their lifetime. Hold an awareness and a care for their suffering as you send them wishes that their suffering ease, that their suffering cease. Know that they are sending you their care and wishes for your release from suffering as well. Now imagine the joys and loves this person has had in their life. Especially moments of finding their path, healing and awakening into their own aliveness and wholeness, of learning to love themselves. Send them wishes that their joy continue, that their joy increase. Know that they are sending you wishes for your continued and increased joy at the same time. Now imagine this person facing the ups and downs of their life, the ups and downs of being human, and send them wishes for equanimity, that they meet the events of their lives with calmness, peacefulness, resilience. Know that they are wishing for you the same.

Experiential Exercise #4: in Forgiveness practice

Forgiveness works both ways. Sometimes we do things that hurt others and we regret it. Other times we're on the receiving end of others' hurtful words or actions. Until we are able to come to some resolution with such conflicts, we spend lots of energy either in guilt or anger. Forgiveness is what frees up that energy and allows our hearts to open to life and greater well-being. When we've been humbled by our own unskillful actions and need to ask forgiveness, that can be a spring board toward forgiving others.

Asking forgiveness:

1. Bring someone to mind that you may have acted unskillfully with. Imagine them in front of you.
2. Get in touch with any remorse you have. Reflect on your state of mind and the confusion or ignorance that would cause you to harm them.
3. Apologize by saying silently, "I'm truly sorry for any harm I might have caused you. I ask your forgiveness."
4. Imagine them hearing your sincerity, taking in your words and forgiving you. Notice how that feels.

Extending forgiveness:

1. Bring someone to mind who has acted unskillfully towards you and caused you to suffer in some way. Imagine them in front of you.
2. Reflect on their state of mind and the confusion or ignorance that would cause them to harm you.
3. Extend forgiveness by silently saying, "For any harm you may have caused me intentionally or unintentionally, I forgive you. I forgive your confusion."

4. Image seeing them take in your words and feel your forgiveness. Notice how that feels.

If you're not ready to forgive someone, then forgive yourself for being just where you are, particularly if you judge yourself for feeling the way you do.

Closing Meditation

May our sincere efforts to practice loving others, in the spirit of inter-connectedness and forgiveness, deepen our capacities for joy – moment by moment.

Homework to Practice Loving Others

1. Seeing the goodness in someone brings something real, alive, and uplifting out of them. It allows trust to develop between people who scarcely know each other.

For one week, take on the practice of looking for the good in everyone you come in contact with. See in each person the desire to be safe, accepted, and loved. Even if you know someone's shortcomings, keep looking for the positive qualities, creativity, playfulness, a caring heart, intelligence, loyalty – any and all positive qualities you might admire. Notice what effect this has on how you feel toward other people and on your interactions with them. Notice the effect it has on your own state of mind.

2. Practice metta for your self, a benefactor, a dear friend, a neutral person every day, and a difficult person at least once a week. Notice the opening of your own heart.

Resources: The Buddha's Words on Kindness (Metta Sutta)

This is what should be done
 By one who is skilled in goodness,
 And who knows the path of peace:
 Let them be able and upright,
 Straightforward and gentle in speech.
 Humble and not conceited,
 Contented and easily satisfied.
 Unburdened with duties and frugal in their ways.
 Peaceful and calm, and wise and skillful,
 Not proud and demanding in nature.
 Let them not do the slightest thing
 That the wise would later reprove.
 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.
 Whether standing or walking, seated or lying down
 Free from drowsiness,
 One should sustain this recollection.
 This is said to be the sublime abiding.
 By not holding to fixed views,
 The pure-hearted one, having clarity of vision,
 Being freed from all sense desires,
 Is not born again into this world.

Resources for the Joy of Loving Others - Quotes

Inter-connectedness

A hundred times every day I remind myself that my inner and outer life depend on the labors of other men, living and dead, and that I must exert myself in order to give in the same measure as I have received and am still receiving.

- Albert Einstein

All who find happiness in this world have done so by wishing for the happiness of many others. All who find unhappiness in this world have done so by aiming just for their own happiness.

- Shantideva

Help your neighbor's boat across, and lo! Your own has reached the shore.

- Hindu proverb

Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be. This is the interrelated structure of reality.

- Martin Luther King, Jr.

Our stream of thought has been working to create an impression of an isolated “self,” set apart from all others, which appears real, substantial, and thereby seemingly safe. Although we have all believed such thoughts of “self” as something isolated from and over against others, we have never existed in that way. Therefore, we can never become happy or fulfilled by pretending to exist in that way. Rather, we have always existed in much deeper relationship to all others, who in their innate nature of goodness and their self-centered habits of thought are like alternative versions of ourselves. That is the reality of our existence.

- John Makransky

A human being is a part of the whole called by us universe, a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings as something separated from the rest, a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty.

- Albert Einstein

We cannot live for ourselves alone. Our lives are connected by a thousand invisible threads, and along these sympathetic fibers, our actions run as causes and return to us as results.

- Herman Melville

At times our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us.

- Albert Schweitzer

Thou hast made me know to friends whom I knew not. Thou hast given me seats in homes not my own. Thou hast brought the distant near and made a brother of the stranger.

I am uneasy at heart when I have to leave my accustomed shelter; I forget that there abides the old in the new, and that there also thou abidest.

Through birth and death, in this world or in others, wherever thou leadest me it is thou, the same, the one companion of my endless life who ever linkest my heart with bonds of joy to the unfamiliar.

When one knows thee, then alien there is none, then no door is shut. Oh, grant me my prayer that I may never lose the bliss of the touch of the one in the play of the many.

- Rabindranath Tagore

There is an energy field between humans. And, when we reach out in passion, it is met with an answering passion and changes the relationship forever.

- Rollo May

The meeting of two personalities is like the contact of two chemical substances; if there is any reaction, both are transformed.

- Carl G. Jung

Consider the following. We humans are social beings. We come into the world as the result of others' actions. We survive here in dependence on others. Whether we like it or not, there is hardly a moment of our lives when we do not benefit from others' activities. For this reason it is hardly surprising that most of our happiness arises in the context of our relationships with others.

- Tenzin Gyatso, 14th Dalai Lama

Only through our connectedness to others can we really know and enhance the self. And only through working on the self can we begin to enhance our connectedness to others.

- Harriet Goldhor Lerner

The unique personality which is the real life in me, I can not gain unless I search for the real life in others. I am myself spiritually dead unless I reach out to the fine quality dormant in others. For it is only with the god enthroned in the innermost shrine of the other, that the god hidden me, will consent to appear.

- Felix Adler

The least movement is of importance to all nature. The entire ocean is affected by a pebble.

- Blaise Pascal

We are all connected to everyone and everything in the universe. Therefore, everything one does as an individual affects the whole. All thoughts, words, images, prayers, blessings, and deeds are listened to by all that is.

- Serge Kahili King

We don't accomplish anything in this world alone...and whatever happens is the result of the whole tapestry of one's life and all the weavings of individual threads from one to another that creates something.

- Sandra Day O'Connor

Relationships are all there is. Everything in the universe only exists because it is in relationship to everything else. Nothing exists in isolation. We have to stop pretending we are individuals that can go it alone.

- Margaret Wheatley

Live in fragments no longer. Only connect...

E. M. Forster

The life I touch for good or ill will touch another life, and that in turn another, until who knows where the trembling stops or in what far place my touch will be felt.

- Frederick Buechner

The same stream of life that runs through my veins night and day runs through the worlds and dances in rhythmic measures. It is the same life that shoots in joy through the dust of the earth in numberless blades of grass and breaks into tumultuous waves of leaves and flowers. It is the same life that is rocked in the ocean-cradle of birth and of death, in ebb and in flow. I feel my limbs are made glorious by the touch of this world of life. And my pride is from the life-throb of ages dancing in my blood this moment.

- Rabindranath Tagore

I honor the place within you where
The entire universe resides.

I honor the place within you of love and light,
Of peace and truth.

I honor the place within you where,
when you are in that place in you
and I am in that place in me,
there is only one of us.

- Mahatma Gandhi

Resources: Quotes on Leisure and Sweet Fun

Each day, and the living of it, has to be a conscious creation in which discipline and order are relieved with some play and pure foolishness.

- Mary Satton

The word “silly” derives from the Greek ‘selig’ meaning blessed. There is something sacred in being able to be silly.

- Paul Pearsall

If you are losing your leisure, look out; you may be losing your soul.

- Logan P. Smith

In rare moments of deep play, we can lay aside our sense of self, shed time’s continuum, ignore pain, and sit quietly in the absolute present, watching the world’s ordinary miracles. No mind or heart hobbles. No analyzing or explaining. No questing for logic. No promises. No goals. No relationships. No worry. One is completely open to whatever drama may unfold.

- Diane Ackerman

If a man insisted always on being serious, and never allowed himself a bit of fun and relaxation, he would go mad or become unstable without knowing it.

- Herodotus

The true object of all human life is play. Earth is a task garden; heaven is a playground.

- G.K. Chesterton

Unless each day can be looked back upon as one in which an individual has had some fun, some joy, some real satisfaction, that day is a loss.

- Anon.

He who does not get fun and enjoyment out of every day...needs to re-organize his life.

- George Matthew Adams

The most wasted of all days is one without laughter.

- e.e.cummings

There is no pleasure in having nothing to do; the fun is in having lots to do and not doing it.

- Mary W. Little

Time you enjoyed wasting is not wasted time.

- T.S. Eliot

No man is a failure who is enjoying life.

- William Feather

We don't stop playing because we turn old, but turn old because we stop playing.

- George Bernard Shaw

There can be no high civilization where there is not ample leisure.

- Henry Ward Beecher

Leisure is the mother of philosophy

- Thomas Hobbes

All intellectual improvement arises from leisure.

- Samuel Johnson

Do you know that conversation is one of the greatest pleasures in life? But it wants leisure.

- William Somerset Maugham

The happiest hours of my life have been spent in the flow of affection among friends.

- Thomas Jefferson

He enjoys true leisure who has time to improve his soul's estate.
 - Henry David Thoreau

The soul is dyed by the color of its leisure hours.
 W. R. Inge

Leisure is a form of silence, not noiselessness. It is the silence of contemplation such as occurs when we let our minds rest on a rosebud, a child at play, a Divine mystery, or a waterfall.
 - Fulton J. Sheen

For lack of attention a thousand forms of loveliness elude us every day.
 - Evelyn Underhill

And let your best be for your friend. If he must know the ebb of your tide, let him know its flood also. For what is your friend that you should seek with him hours to kill? Seek with him always hours to live. For it is his to fill your need, but not your emptiness. And in the sweetness of friendship, let there be laughter, and the sharing of pleasures. For in the dew of little things the heart finds its morning and is refreshed.
 - Kahlil Gibran

I ask for a moment's indulgence
 To sit by thy side.
 The works that I have in hand
 I will finish afterwards.

Away from the sight of thy face
 My heart knows no rest nor respite,
 And my work becomes an endless toil
 In a shoreless sea of toil.

To-day the summer has come at my window
 With its sighs and murmurs;
 And the bees are plying their minstrelsy
 At the court of the flowering grove.

Now it is time to sit quiet,
 Face to face with thee,
 And to sing dedication of life
 In this silent and overflowing leisure.
 - Rabindranath Tagore, Gitanjali

Resources: Quotes on Play and Creativity

Almost all creativity involves purposeful play.

- Abraham Maslow

Deep play precedes deep work.

- Jeremy Rifkin

For a small child there is no division between playing and learning; between the things he or she does 'just for fun' and things that are 'educational.' The child learns while living and any part of living that is enjoyable is also play.

- Penelope Leach

Play is by its very nature educational. And it should be pleasurable. When the fun goes out of play, most often so does the learning.

- Joanne E. Oppenheim

[Talking about his first computer] Like all kids we not only fooled around with our toys, we changed them. If you've ever watch a child with a cardboard carton and a box of crayons create a spaceship with cool control panels, or listened to their improvised rules, such as "Red cars can jump all others," then you know that this impulse to make a toy do more is at the heart of innovative childhood play. It is also the essence of creativity.

- Bill Gates

Blaise Pascal used to mark with charcoal the walls of his playroom, seeking a means of making a circle perfectly round and a triangle whose sides and angle were all equal. He discovered these things for himself and then began to seek the relationship which existed between them. He did not know any mathematical terms and so he made up his own. Using these names he made axioms and finally developed perfect demonstrations, until he had come to the thirty-second proposition of Euclid.

- C. M. Cox

I do not know what I may appear to the world; but to myself I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the seashore, and diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, whilst the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me.

- Isaac Newton

The Paleolithic hunters who painted the unsurpassed animal murals on the ceiling of the cave at Altamira had only rudimentary tools. Art is older than production for use, and play older than work. Man was shaped less by what he had to do than by what he did in playful moments. It is the child in man that is the source of his uniqueness and creativeness, and the playground is the optimal milieu for the unfolding of his capacities.

- Eric Hoffer

In every man there is a hidden child which is called the urge to create and he prefers as play things and serious things not the miniature ships, recreated in the minutest detail, but the walnut shall with a bird feather as a mast and sail and a pebble as a captain. He also wants to be able to participate and to co-create in art, rather than being simply an admiring viewer. For this “child in man” is the immortal creator within him.

- Christian Morgenstern

Necessity may be the mother of invention, but play is certainly the father.

- Roger von Oech

If you like to make things out of wood, or sew, or dance or style people’s hair, or dream up stories and act them out, or play the trumpet or jump rope, or whatever you really love to do, and you love that in front of your children, that’s going to be a far more important gift than anything you could ever give them wrapped up in a box with ribbons.

- Fred M. Rogers

The dynamic principle of fantasy is play, which belongs also to the child, and as such it appears to be inconsistent with the principle of serious work. But without this playing with fantasy no creative work has ever yet come to birth. The debt we owe to the play of imagination is incalculable. Without playing with fantasy, no creative work has yet come into being.

- Carl G. Jung

When we play, we also celebrate holy uselessness. Like the calf frolicking in the meadow, we need no pretense or excuses. Work is productive; play, in its disinterestedness and self-forgetting, can be fruitful.

- Margaret Guenther

The path that is best for you is the path that keeps the best of you in play.

- Bernie DeKoven

Laughter is the closest distance between two people.

- Victor Borge

A person without a sense of humor is like a wagon without springs -- jolted by every pebble in the road. - Henry Ward Beecher

You can discover more about a person in an hour of play than in a year of conversation.

- Plato

Play is the only way the highest intelligence of humankind can unfold. Joseph Chilton Pearce

Necessity may be the mother of invention, but play is certainly the father. – Roger von Oech

The creation of something new is not accomplished by the intellect, but by the play instinct acting from inner necessity. – Carl Jung

Play, in short, prepares the brain to handle the unexpected. Lee Alan Dugatkin.

Our brain comes hard-wired with an urge to play, one that hurls us into sociability. A child's play both demands and creates its own safe space, one in which she can confront threats, fears, and dangers, but always come through whole. Play offers a child a natural way to manage feared separations or abandonment, rendering them instead opportunities for mastery and self-discovery.

- Daniel Goleman

It is paradoxical that many educators and parents still differentiate between a time for learning and a time for play without seeing the vital connection between them.

-Leo Buscaglia

The master in the art of living makes little distinction between his work and his play. He simply pursues his vision of excellence at whatever he does, leaving others to decide whether he is working or playing. To him he's always doing both. - James Michener

In childhood we invent ourselves through play. In adulthood, play becomes a safe form of learning, an opportunity to re-invent ourselves. At Urban Recess (a fitness group for women emphasizing team play) I could see my adult life from a new perspective and find parts of myself that had been sitting unused in the attic of my brain. I could try on identities like a new pair of shin guards and write a new story for myself. - Karen Solomon

We don't stop playing because we grow old; we grow old because we stop playing.

- George Bernard Shaw

He who laughs, lasts." Mary Pettibone Poole

We are never more fully alive, more completely ourselves, or more deeply engrossed in anything than when we are playing. -Charles Schaefer

Every time I see an adult on a bicycle, I no longer despair for the future of the human race.-H. G. Wells

And forget not that the earth delights to feel your bare feet and the winds long to play with your hair. – Kahlil Gibran