WORKSHEET 3A

THE FIRST FOUR LIBERATING ACTIONS

GENEROSITY

Generosity opens every situation! It creates trust and makes every human encounter rich. You can be generous in different ways - on the one hand by giving material things and on the other hand with personal commitment, by sharing your strength, good feelings and qualities, by protecting those in need of help, by giving someone an education, by simply being there for others when they need you and giving your time and sympathy. Of course, you benefit others the most by helping them to become independent and always being a good example.

EXERCISES

- Your friend comes to visit. He/she seems grumpy and tense. How can you change the situation in a way that makes sense for everyone involved?
- Do you know situations in which you have acted or reacted generously without thinking about a benefit for yourself? What was that feeling like?
- Have you yourself ever been surprised by someone else's generosity? What effect did this have on you?

MEANINGFUL BEHAVIOR

Every day we do many things, speak countless words, and have many more thoughts of which we are mostly unaware. The second Liberating Action gives tips for valuable interpersonal behavior to shape one's life in a way that is satisfying to oneself and useful to others. When it is understood that behavior governed by love and compassion leads to positive feedback experiences in the long run, everyone will be more responsible with their actions. This only succeeds if one does not allow oneself to be distracted or even determined by external stimuli. If one expresses respect and compassion with what one does, says and thinks, then one not only brings happiness to others, but also places pleasant impressions in one's own mind and thus shapes both the present life and the future.

EXERCISES

- What does a person need from other people in order to feel good? It is best to start from your own desires.
- What does meaningful behavior mean to you on a physical, linguistic, and spiritual level?
- Recall a situation in which you were surprised by the effect of your own compassionate action. What did this trigger internally in you and in the person in question?

PATIENCE

Patience is the opposite of anger! Anger arises from the feeling of weakness, powerlessness, unfulfilled expectations and deeply personal evaluation. Not only friendships and love relationships can be destroyed by it, but also the pleasant impressions in our mind. It's like burning our money to generate some heat. To gain more control over anger, Buddha advises the antidote - patience. Patience is the ability to handle difficulties with emotional balance and to face circumstances that cannot be changed, such as illness, without judgment. When one does not feel oneself to be a target, one better understands that everyone behaves exactly as one feels: one succeeds, for example, in developing compassion for angry people because one understands that they act out of confusion rather than malice and, driven by anger, have little control over their behavior.

EXERCISES

- Imagine you are standing in a queue at the supermarket. There are a few people in front of you and you are already getting a little impatient. Then someone pushes into the queue from the side in front of you.
- Which elements of the situation cannot be changed and which can be changed - externally and internally?
- What possibilities do you have in the situation to master it without getting angry?
- In the situation, how could the person who jumped the gun have behaved to spare your feelings?
- Do you remember a situation where anger caused you to do something that you later greatly regretted? How do you assess that situation today, from a distance and without anger, and how would you act now?

JOYFUL EFFORT

Each training starts with simple tasks, continuously increasing the level of performance. What was laborious and needed overcoming at the beginning, happens effortlessly and playfully after a period of training. It is even fun.

Every time you put extra power into what you are doing, you get extra energy and qualities. Sometimes going beyond usual limits brings strength and endurance. Here everyone has to find out the right measure: to produce a beautiful sound on a guitar, the strings have to be properly tuned. If they are not tight enough, there will be no sound; if they are too tight, they will break. This is as true for working with the mind as it is for all worldly goals.

In fact, scientific research into happiness has confirmed what Buddha said some 2600 years ago: whoever does something voluntarily for others becomes happy. This activity brings growth: Inwardly, one becomes more joyful and powerful; outwardly, things change in a way that today might be described as "improving the quality of life."

EXERCISES

- What do you stand up for? What is meaningful to you and what is meaningful to many people?
- Have you ever achieved something special? What did you put into it?
- Have you ever gotten out of a stuck situation by overcoming yourself? Briefly note your observations.