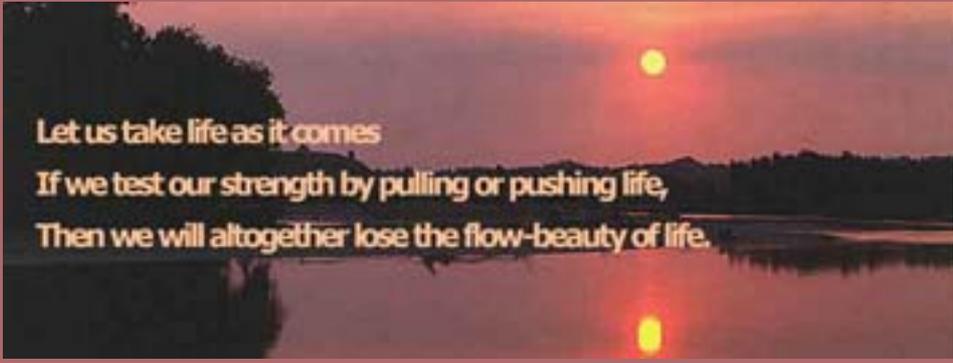


Class 8 - Praise and Gratitude



Let us take life as it comes
If we test our strength by pulling or pushing life,
Then we will altogether lose the flow-beauty of life.

Goals

In Class 8 you will:

- learn how to offer and receive praise spiritually
- discover opportunities to feel gratitude

Praise

"This is brilliant work, Jess. I have marked you one of the top of the class, well done!"

Jessie had worked very hard on her assignment. For days she had been anxiously and studiously labouring over it. Now her lecturer was praising her effort. She looked down at the ground, scuffing her feet, and allowing herself a small half-smile, she only just stuttered, "Well, I know if I had of put a bit more time into it, and I didn't have problems with my computer, then it would've been much better."

The lecturer caught the mood. "Well Jess, you know you are often late and your next assignment is due in a couple of weeks, maybe with a bit more application you can iron out those wrinkles." She looked away and sighed as she felt the anxiety that had fleetingly left her beginning to weigh heavily on her again as she pondered the magnitude of this next task.

How many of us respond to praise in this way? And again, how many of us offer praise in this way? Praise is one of the most misunderstood energies available to us. Received correctly, it offers us the opportunity to very quickly and easily connect to the natural flow of the universe, tuning directly to the will of our soul, incorrectly, however, and it as though we are walking right past the beauty of a sunrise, distracted by the worries of an overdue electricity bill.

"What sunshine is to flowers, smiles are to humanity. These are but trifles, to be sure; but, scattered along life's pathway, the good they do is inconceivable." - Joseph Addison

Put very simply, the gift of offering praise is the opportunity to offer another person reinforcement, encouragement, even empowerment.

From the spiritual point of view, in this place we call heaven, there is a constant empowering energy that is being offered at every moment by the universe, it is for us to become conscious of it to feel ourselves truly in heaven. Praise is an insight to this energy. When we can offer our praise in the purest way, we will feel no sense of ego or separativity, but a real sense of oneness and joy in the synchronicity of our endeavours. We will offer praise with the humblest joy of being surpassed if necessary, feeling our delight in the oneness we experience with the person we are praising.

To receive praise is also an art. The highest receiver of praise simply connects humbly to the universal empowering energy, realizing that in the best sense of the term, all we ever do as members of the community of heaven is channel the empowering energies that flow all around us. We can no more claim that the ego has performed an action, than we can claim to control forever our life-breath.

"Silent gratitude isn't much use to anyone" - G. B. Stern



Imagine what might have happened if Jess had realized that the praise she was being offered was an incredibly powerful empowering energy that she could utilize to advance her progress through the 'success spiral' (see class 5: password = freedom). Instead of kicking the floor and diverting the empowerment being offered to another perceived deficiency, she might have opened herself valiantly to her real nature and received the vigour and determination she needed to effortlessly perform

her next action, with the self-belief and confidence to breeze through. Instead she felt only fear and dread.

In offering praise, Jess's lecturer first effort was fine, but perhaps if he had realized the opportunity he had to really empower Jess, he might have tried to much more insistently praise Jess. He might not have offered his criticism until another occasion, when he was sure that it was absolutely constructive to do so and that Jess had solidly received the praise he wanted to offer. Importantly, the lecturer actually offered praise - often we put off praise until it is forgotten. Don't waste an opportunity to empower - it is a gift.

There is a delicate balance with all of this. Sometimes praise can be discerned as being offered from such a haughty egoic height, that it is perceived in a condescending manner. This will only occur when the offerer or the receiver is caught with the feeling that it is their ego that is doing the action. This must be strongly guarded against, by humbly realizing that this is heavenly energy we receive and offer, we do so by simply channelling - not through any sense of ownership.

"Blessed are those that can give without remembering and receive without forgetting."

Gratitude

The great masters have always talked about gratitude as the great opener of the heart. That by offering gratitude we actually increase the heart's receptivity. What a wonderful opportunity we have with such a simple dynamic as a 'thank you'.

Thank
You

In fact, the same force we connect with in the flow of offering and receiving praise is utilized in the spiritual offering of gratitude, only much more consciously. Real spiritual gratitude is not about bowing and scraping before a great ogre of a master or God in case he gets angry and punishes us on some inconceivable whim. Real gratitude is simply an awareness of the force and all that it flows through. We merely give thanks to the empowering energy that is at every moment gracefully consenting to energize, inspire and uplift our lives in this magnificent heaven.

Try it! How simple a little exercise, but you will be forever changed by it, if you can just suspend your disbelief long enough to do it's little work.

"If you concentrate on finding whatever is good in every situation, you will discover that your life will suddenly be filled with gratitude, a feeling that nurtures the soul." - Rabbi Harold Kushner



What I would like you to do for 5 minutes every day this week, is write down seven things you are grateful for this day. They might be as simple as 'a great pizza in front of the television' or as esoteric as 'the rising sun and the newness and beauty it offered,' it does not matter, just write them down.

"If the only prayer you ever say in your entire life is thank you, it will be enough." - Meister Eckhardt

As the week progresses, work more and more on trying to connect with that empowering force that vibrates through the universe eternally. You will find it potent the more you feel gratitude not as something that finds its source in you, but as a component of the force itself. A component of love itself. This is important, the more you explore praise and gratitude, the more you will realize that their gifts are in the flow of universal love that pulses through the heartbeat of every soul on this earth, and just like a river we cannot own any element of it, we can only witness in awe its majesty. Practice this endlessly and you will find yourself solidly conscious of the heaven in this moment, now.

"He is a wise man who does not grieve for the things which he has not, but rejoices for those which he has." - Epictetus

More Quotes...

Be Thankful

*Be thankful that you don't already have everything you desire,
If you did, what would there be to look forward to?*

*Be thankful when you don't know something
For it gives you the opportunity to learn.*

*Be thankful for the difficult times.
During those times you grow.*

*Be thankful for your limitations
Because they give you opportunities for improvement.*

Be thankful for each new challenge

Because it will build your strength and character.

*Be thankful for your mistakes
They will teach you valuable lessons.*

*Be thankful when you're tired and weary
Because it means you've made a difference.*

*It is easy to be thankful for the good things.
A life of rich fulfillment comes to those who are
also thankful for the setbacks.*

*GRATITUDE can turn a negative into a positive.
Find a way to be thankful for your troubles
and they can become your blessings.*

~ Author Unknown ~

"Nothing in your life is beyond redemption." - Sting

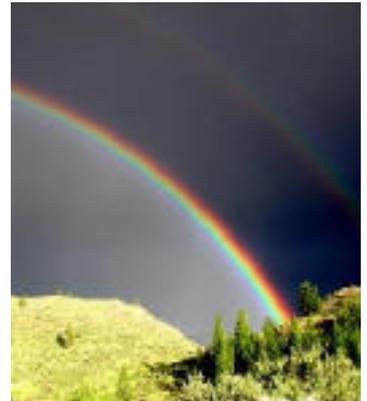
"No one is useless in this world who lightens the burden of another." - Charles Dickens

"When I started counting my blessings, my whole life turned around." - Willie Nelson

"It is impossible to feel grateful and depressed in the same moment." - Naomi Williams

"You cannot do a kindness too soon because you never know how soon it will be too late." - Ralph Waldo Emerson

"As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them." - John Fitzgerald Kennedy



Exercise 8

Mantra meditation

Prepare for your meditation as usual

A mantra is a word or a phrase that is repeated over and over as a means of achieving focus and concentration for deep meditation.

The failsafe method of meditation is with mantras. No matter how much trouble you are having concentrating or getting time, a mantric meditation will always get you meditating quickly. It is also the easiest. I like to use mantras during the day at any time (not out loud) to get me centred. For example, at work, I might be sitting in a boring meeting & chanting quietly helps me remember my life's goals (and keeps me awake).

AUM is the most powerful mantra. It is able to reveal all the qualities of the soul. But choose a mantra you would like to use. Repeat it out loud or to yourself. Feel that the source of the mantra is in the deepest, inmost recesses of your heart and that you have to really focus, really concentrate to open the floodgates of that quality. Use the flow of your breath if you like to create the rhythm of the flow of energy.

For this exercise, please try three different mantras. As you know in the classes I always give people the opportunity to vote for the mantras they like the best. Invariably 'Peace', 'Love' and 'AUM' are the most popular - so let's try them. For each of these mantras I would like you to feel that you are not creating the quality but rather that the quality exists in infinite measure within you and all you are doing is allowing it to be channelled into your consciousness. For example, let's try 'peace'.

Please close your eyes and imagine a fountain of peace is flowing from the inmost recesses of your heart. You might visualise it is a light or even a rainbow that is shining from deep within and flowing out into every atom of your being. With each repetition of 'Peace' feel that flow of energy. Try and remember that this flow is not your possession - it is the channelling of the infinite peace that is the nature of the kingdom of heaven and rises from within each of us.

Repeat the mantra out loud for 2-4 minutes then for the same time to yourself. Take a moment or two to contemplate what you have felt at the end of each mantric exercise.

Repeat the process with the mantra 'love'. You might imagine that your repetition of the mantra is allowing you to connect to that most powerful connecting force, love.

Finally with the mantra, AUM, you might simply recall that AUM is said to be the closest sound to the actual vibration of the soul. That every quality is present in AUM and the wonderful thing is that whatever we need will be presented to us with the repetition of this most powerful of all mantras.

[To listen to this exercise click here \(to save to your computer just right click and select "save target as" or "save link as"\)](#)

[click here for a mirror site to download the same exercise](#) [Any problems click here](#)

Summary

During this eighth class you will have;

- practised offering and receiving praise with your heart
- recognized the things you are grateful for in your life
- realized that gratitude is an opening to love.