



INSIGHT MEDITATION COMMUNITY OF CHARLOTTESVILLE

THE BRAHMA VIHARAS—AN OVERVIEW OF THE 4 HEART QUALITIES A 10-Session Series

<http://imeditation.org/BV-Series>

The Brahma Viharas (Pali phrase for “heavenly abidings”) are a prominent part of the Buddha’s teaching. These refer to four natural heart qualities which, when cultivated, enlarge and sweeten our lives. The qualities are:

- Lovingkindness—A tender regard for all. A wish for true happiness for ourselves and others.
- Compassion—The natural response of lovingkindness when it encounters suffering in others or in ourselves (self-compassion).
- Sympathetic joy—The natural response of lovingkindness when it encounters happiness in others or ourselves.
- Equanimity—Even-mindedness. Not to be confused with indifference or apathy. A sensitive acceptance of the constant changes in life, including acceptance of suffering that is beyond our ability to alter.

Ours is a culture of violence. We are fed it daily in so many ways, blatant and subtle, that we may to some degree normalize it, even as we know it to be totally unacceptable. In this context, practicing the Brahma Viharas is a radical act, one that requires perseverance and courage. In practice, we work to express the heart qualities in our personal relationships as well as through the grit of social action.

IMCC teachers are presenting a ten-part series on Tuesday nights focusing on active engagement with the Brahma Viharas. Starting with an overview, the series will devote two sessions to each quality. The first session will explore the quality with the aim of inspiring you to practice earnestly. The second will present practice options for you to work with. We will conclude the series with a wrap up. The series schedule is:

March 6- Brahma Viharas—Overview
March 12-Lovingkindness, 1—Exploration
March 27- Lovingkindness, 2—Practice Exercises
April 10: Compassion, 1—Exploration
April 24: Compassion, 2—Practice Exercises
May 8 Sympathetic Joy, 1—Exploration
May 22- Sympathetic Joy, 2—Practice Exercises
June 12 Equanimity, 1—Exploration
June 26- Equanimity, 2—Practice Exercises
July 3 Brahma Viharas—Assessments and the Way Forward