

Audio File Transcript

Remembering the Wish To Be Loved

This practice is called remembering the wish to be loved. When we remind ourselves that we wish to be valued, appreciated, or even loved, our awareness goes deep and we slip through the net of shame. We shift our attention from what's bothering us about ourselves to the motivation behind shame. But to do this, we need to find just the right words. So if you would like to explore which words are right for you, you can try the following exercise, and it would be helpful to have a pen and paper available, and then to find a comfortable position. And for this exercise, please again think of a time when you felt mild to moderately ashamed. So again, maybe you did something, say, mildly dishonest and you were discovered. Or maybe you forgot an important event on your child's school calendar. So just take a moment and find an event to work with, something that made you feel a little ashamed. And at the time, what were you afraid that others might have thought about you? Can you give it a name? So for example, maybe you were afraid that other people would consider you insensitive or unkind or maybe a little stupid or weird or just bad in some way. What were you afraid others might think? And simply that you are afraid that others might think this is a sure sign that you wanted people to think well of you, as we all do.

So let's shift to the positive side. How would you have liked people to think about you in this situation? So in other words, did you want their respect or appreciation? Did you want to be valued by them? or belonged. Maybe you wanted to matter to somebody, to be included. Maybe you just wanted to be loved. So what word describes what you wanted at the time? And now let's broaden the field a little bit and let that particular situation slip into the background and consider how you would generally like people to think about you. It's certainly unrealistic to expect that everyone will feel this way. So it's an ideal scenario I'm painting here. But in a perfect world, whenever you meet somebody, would you like to be appreciated or respected or valued, accepted, included, connected, special or loved? So what word describes this universal wish, this longing, this yearning that we all feel? What's the best word for you? What word feels the most comfortable? And now, see if you can make a phrase for yourself that affirms this deep wish. Affirms the wish at the same time affirms the universality of the wish, the common humanity of the wish. So for example, you could say, just as all beings wish to be loved, so do I wish to be loved. Or just as everyone wants to belong, so do I wish to belong. Or everyone needs to be valued and respected, so do I. Or yes, I want to be loved just like everybody else.

So what phrase feels most natural to you that captures your wish and also the universality of that wish. And when some words resonate with you, go ahead and write them down. And then if you like, you can close your eyes and you can repeat your phrase a few times to yourself and see how it feels. Does it validate a tender yearning inside? Is it true? Does it allow your heart to rest a little? Or do the words stir up a little bit of doubt or confusion? A good phrase will allow your heart to rest. If your phrase doesn't do that, that's okay, but it's an invitation just to stick with the process and see if you can find another phrase, just the right language, that captures this deep wish that we all have to connect, to belong, to be appreciated, to be valued. And when you have a phrase, the next step then is first thing in the morning, after you wake up and before you get out of bed, to put a hand over your heart or some other comforting place on your body and to say the phrase a few times to yourself, such as, just as all beings wish to be loved, so do I wish to be loved, reminding yourself of this simple fact that most of us have forgotten because it's inconvenient to remember. So starting your day in this way so that you are aware of this deep inclination that's been with us since birth. And then also perhaps forming an intention to notice when you feel a moment of shame in daily life and when that happens, to say the phrase a few times to yourself. So you feel shame and then you respond with, just as all beings wish to be loved, so do I wish to be loved. Or whatever your phrase may be. So what we're doing is shifting our attention from the experience of shame to the motivation behind shame, and then see what happens. Okay, thank you for your practice.